Fulfilling Dreams

SOS Children’s Village Latur

Building Families for Children for over 50 years
Disclaimer: Names of children have been changed in this booklet to protect their privacy.
Ref. No.: Date: 12.01.2017

Message

It gives me immense pleasure to know that SOS Children’s Village, Latur is providing long Term Family Based Care to parentless, abandoned and needy children continually from the 1993 Latur earthquake. I am very much impressed by the family based care concept of SOS Children’s Villages of India. I am very happy to see that more than 150 boys and girls who were affected during devastating earthquake are now settled in their lives and have become contributing citizens of the country.

I am satisfied that the mission for which we have given the land to SOS Children’s Village, Latur is becoming successful and hopeful that the devotional work towards the rehabilitation for needy, abandoned and parentless children will going on with same spirit in future also.

I wish success for the Mission!

(Dilip Deshmukh)
It gives me immense pleasure to know that SOS Children’s Village, Latur which provides long term Family Based Care to parentless, abandoned and needy children is going to celebrate the completion of 23 years of its service. I am very influenced by the Family Based Care concept of SOS Children’s Village and being the Chairperson of CWC, I always send parentless, abandoned and needy children to SOS Children’s Village, Latur for their permanent care and protection. Whenever I do inspection or make a visit to SOS Children’s Village, Latur, I get surprised to see the faces of children which were once overshadowed with gloominess and sadness some time ago, are now beaming with cheerfulness and happiness. My heart really overwhelms with joy at seeing these cheerful faces. On this auspicious occasion, I express my heartiest congratulation to the entire SOS Family, especially I admire the unconditional love of Mothers and dedicated work of the Co-Workers of SOS Children’s Village, Latur for the children in need.

My best wishes will be always with the Children and Mothers of SOS Children’s Village, Latur.

With Best Wishes I remain.

Smt. Shila Dande
Chairperson
District Child Welfare Committee, Latur
Message

I appreciate the work of SOS Children's Village Latur in child welfare and rehabilitation from over 20 years. The efforts to empower the surrounding bpl community and nurture child rights for holistic development of the children in their biological family, SOS family Strengthening Programme plays very important role. Maharashtra Centre for Entrepreneurship Development, Aurangabad, (MCED) is providing entrepreneurship development training to the caregivers. Till date more than 300 caregivers have undergone training and started small scale units. More than 30 caregivers are now able to support their families through the business given by SOS FSP Programme. I am wishing all the best for a great future ahead of SOS Children’s Village, Latur.

Shivajirao Mundhe
Administrative Office, MCED, Aurangabad & Regional Officer, Nanded

Date: 12.01.2017
Greetings ........

SOS Balgram is a well-known NGO working efficiently in Latur District since 1993. This has been practically experienced by me through work coordination with this NGO in 2011. We, in this Industrial Training Institute for Girls have been providing vocational education in different 8 trades and 11 units through regular training to empower women by making them employable as well as to enable them to start their self-employment ventures.

We have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with SOS Balgram under the Central Government’s Scheme of MES (Modular Employability Scheme) for external students to make them employable. Through this scheme, the students belonging to BPL families are given Basic Sewing Operator training in Garment Sector as also undertaken Central Govt. scheme for BPL category women beneficiaries, FSP beneficiaries and their elder children. The Programme was conducted for 25 beneficiaries in the first stage and 25 in second stage (45 days’ duration). All these beneficiaries have been provided employment in Latur Integrated Textile Ltd., M/s Shivam Garment located in MIDC Latur.

We have undertaken workshops to guide the students for self-employment. The following SOS students have been provided regular training in this Institute and now they are in employment:

1. Smt. Surekha Devrale - Fruits and Vegetables Processing
2. Smt. Renuka Nannaware - Dress Making

The above activities have been carried out successfully due to good coordination between this Institute and Sow. Vaishnavi Jogalekar, Smt. Saroj Pawar and all their colleagues as well as Late Shri Singh. This Institute is bound to boost this message of coordination and cooperation in future also.

We extend our hearty greetings for SOS Balgram Latur in their successful and praiseworthy activities for the up-liftment of the downtrodden strata in the society.

V.K. Gadekar
Principal,
Industrial Training Institute (Girls), Latur
SOS बालग्राम लाहौर

14.01.2017

जब मैं इंटरक्ली देने आयी तब मुझे मुकपं के सारे बच्चे देखे तब सारी नयी सुरुवात नये बच्चे थे। किराया का घर लेकर रहते थे। एक दिन म 25.30 बच्चे और दो मदर रहती थी। बाद में मुझे दिल्ली के ट्रेनिंग को मेज दिया था। वहां मैं थी साल रही। बाद में तुझे लाहौर में बुलाया गया। बाद में मुझे नया घर मिला। नये 10 बच्चे मिले तब मुझे लगा मैं दस बच्चे कैसी समझानी मेरे से होगा या नहीं। मैं तो डर गयी थी। सोचने लगी कैसे करूँ। जब मुझे सारे बच्चे माँ करके बोलते थे। तो मुझे बहुत खुशी होती थी। बाद में दो साल के बाद मुझे एक दिन की लड़की आयी तो मुझे लगा इतनी छोटी एक दिन की मैं कैसी समझानी। बहुत डर लगता था तब मैंने हिम्मत से काम किया और बहुत मेरनात की। लड़की बहुत कमजोर थी उसका वजन देढ़ किलो की थी। ये लड़की अभी बिकॉम फर्ट इयर में पढ़ रही है। दो साल के बाद एक 15 दिन की लड़की आयी। ये लड़की अभी 12वीं में पढ़ रही है। बाद में एक दिन का लड़का मिला। लड़का बहुत कमजोर था। उसको भी बहुत मेरनात करनी पड़ी। अभी बड़ी लड़की संभालने में बहुत परिशानी हुई। लेकिन बहुत समझानी रही। बड़ी लड़की ने बहुत मेरनात से पढ़ाई की। एक लड़की ने M.B.A. की अच्छी से नौकरी लगी सादी हुई और सेटल हो गयी। दूसरी ने M.S.W. की ये भी नौकरी कर रही सादी हुई और सेटल हो गयी। तीसरी ने J.N.M. किया और नौकरी कर रही सादी हुई और सेटल हो गयी। और एक लड़की ने A.N.M. किया सादी हुई और सेटल हो गयी। अच्छी से अच्छी जिंदगी जी रही है। ऐसे लाल प्यार से लड़किया संभाली। खुद की लड़किया जैसा प्यार दिया ऐसे मैंने 30 लड़के लड़किया संभाली। मेरे छ लड़को की सादी हुई और चार लड़की हुई। मुझे अभी 13 पोते है। ये अनुपयुक्त दिन 23 साल कैसे गये ये मुझे पता नहीं चला। लेकिन ये तो बहुत सुंदर मे भगवान का आमार प्रकट करती हूँ जिंदगी में कड़ी धुप के बाद उसने मुझे SOS जैसी छाव दी। जो जिंदगी के आख़री लम्बे तक मेरे साथ रहेगा।

धन्यवाद
मदर
शकुंतला डोंगरे
MESSAGE
FROM PRESIDENT

The SOS Children’s Village in Latur was established in 1993 as a response to the disastrous earthquake that left a lot of children parentless. Through the years, the village has provided and extended Family Based Care (FBC) to many more abandoned and parentless children and has helped overcome their fears and traumas. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all Co-Workers, Mothers and Aunts who have showered upon so many children their affection and love and have nurtured them selflessly. You form the pillars of SOS India, and without your dedicated services, it would have been impossible for us to reach this far in our journey.

Apart from delivering long term FBC to children, SOS Children’s Village in Latur has also been working with underprivileged and weaker sections of the society through their Family Strengthening Programme. Our aim is to empower families who need additional support to meet even their basic needs. For this purpose, SOS Village Latur not only provides financial aid to such families, but also works towards their capacity building and empowering them.

This year, SOS Children’s Village Latur was also chosen for piloting the Kinship Care Programme which enables the parentless children to grow up in their family environment and not be separated because of lack of resources. We identified 8 children who fall under our target group and were enrolled in the programme with prior approval from the Child Welfare Committee. Family is the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for growth, well-being and protection of children. With the child’s best interest in mind, our Kinship Care Programme is an alternate child care aimed to place children with relatives, or other kinship caregivers to provide the similar stability, safety and maintenance of the cultural traditions in the child’s upbringing, that he/she would have received with his parents.

From witnessing improvement in the academic records of our children to seeing them getting married, every tiny achievement is a celebration for the SOS India family. It is a proof that we are progressing along the right path. I would also like to take a moment to thank all our esteemed partners and donors, who showed great deal of faith in us and chose to extend their whole hearted support through all these years. I wish all the children at SOS Village Latur a very happy and prosperous future ahead. May you achieve great heights!

Best Regards,

S. Sandilya
President, SOS Children’s Villages of India
MESSAGE
FROM SECRETARY GENERAL

The SOS Children’s Village Latur has been a beacon of hope for abandoned and parentless children since 1993. This souvenir stands as a proof of the remarkable achievements of our village and how exceptionally it has risen in the ladder of excellence over the years. I convey my deep sense of appreciation to all Co-workers, Mothers and Aunts who, with all their hard work and dedication have been working selflessly towards the upliftment of the underprivileged section in our society.

Our Village in Latur is a happy home to many children without parental care. The core foundation of our work lies in ensuring that no child grows up alone and has a loving family to call its own. Family Based Care is delivered to children till the time they become self-sufficient. SOS India envisions a bright and secure future for all children. We take it as our prime responsibility to give every child an opportunity to learn, grow and blossom into successful individuals. SOS Latur currently looks after 139 children through 12 Family Homes.

SOS Children’s Village in Latur also contributes towards empowering families who need external support to survive through its Family Strengthening Programme. Today, SOS Latur caters to the needs of 940 children from 398 vulnerable families (from 9 clusters) and has helped them stay together. I am happy to announce that the outcome of our FSP has been positive ever since its inception as they have even formed 21 Self Help Groups helping women to attain social and economic sustainability; and 10 Bal Panchayats, further strengthening the opportunities given to children and empower them.

Children are our most valuable resource. The way we shape them today is a reflection of how our future is going to look like. It fills my heart with immense joy to see the growth of these children and how they have not let any obstacle deter them from fulfilling their dreams. The potential that our children portray is a reassurance of a brighter tomorrow for all of us. I wish you all success and happiness in all your ventures ahead. May you shine bright!

Best regards,

Anuja Bansal
Secretary General, SOS Children’s Villages of India
CHAPTER 1
ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

We are an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organisation working for the holistic development of parentless children, women and children belonging to vulnerable families. Founded in 1949 in Austria, SOS Children’s Villages began its operations in India in 1964. For over 50 years, we have been reaching out to over 30,000 children and families every year through 32 SOS Children’s Villages and 32 community projects in India. SOS Children’s Villages of India was established in 1964 at Faridabad near Delhi. SOS India has worked with children, communities, disaster struck and disaster prone areas, giving hope to weary communities and families. SOS India is the largest operation within the SOS International Federation of 134 countries.

Genesis

Hermann Gemiener was a philanthropist and the founder of SOS Children’s Villages. He experienced the horrors of war as a soldier in Russia and was subsequently confronted with the isolation and suffering of countless war orphans and homeless children. In his unswerving conviction that help can never be effective as long as children have to grow up without a home to call their own, he set about implementing his idea for SOS Children’s Villages. Committed to caring for children in distress by building loving families and supportive communities, he founded the first SOS Village in Tyrol, Austria, in 1949. Today, SOS Children’s Villages is spread across 134 countries with its unique ‘Family Based Care’ foster homes for children.
SOS India has two flagship programmes — long-term Family Based Care (FBC) for parentless and abandoned children and Family Strengthening Programme (FSP), which works towards empowering disadvantaged families in the neighborhood communities. We are proud that we parent 6700 children daily through Family Based Care and 16700 children through the Family Strengthening Program across India.
On September 30th 1993, Maharashtra’s southern region of Marathwada was struck by an earthquake at 3:53 am, Indian Standard Time. The effects of the quake were devastating, even though the intensity was not more than 6.3 on the Richter scale. Thousands of people died and tens of thousands were injured, as poorly constructed houses and village huts made of stone collapsed on the sleeping populace.

The affected areas about 400 km south-east of Mumbai were Latur, Beed, Osmanabad and their adjoining districts. Dozens of villages in the Latur district were destroyed and many children were left alone.

SOS Children’s Villages of India arrived in the area within days of the calamity. We began our work by giving emergency relief to affected children and provided shelter by placing them in rented accommodations. We were soon able to offer long-term support with the help of the Maharashtra Government to affected families. Helmut Kutin, President of SOS Children’s Villages personally reviewed the situation and started planning the Children’s Village with JN Kaul, Siddharth Kaul and RN Yadav, first director of the village.

Within a year, a new Children’s Village was built and introduced in Latur, thanks to the collective efforts of many people including Vilasrao Deshmukh (Chief Minister) and Parvinsingh Pardeshi (Collector, Latur). We still retain a copy of the first handout and the first advertisement for mothers; that is very precious to us since it got us 12 dedicated mothers who are still serving in SOS Village Latur.
SOS Children’s Village Latur

SOS Village Latur is set on 13 acres of land, 9km north of Latur city, leased from the Latur Nagar Parishad. Over the years, the village has looked after a total of 398 once abandoned and parentless children in need of care and protection.

Family Based Care (FBC)

At present, there are 12 family homes in SOS Latur, housing 139 children who require protection and care. There are three Youth Home facilities within the village: the Arunodaya stage is for boys aged 14-18 years; the Sopan stage is for those in college or who are undergoing professional/higher education; the Gharonda stage is for working professionals.

Till now, the village has nurtured children spanning two generations in 23 years. While 106 children are enrolled in reputed schools of Latur, others are studying in well-known junior colleges. Currently, 18 girls are pursuing their higher education at various institutions in places such as Pune, Ahemadnagar, Satara, Aurangabad, Nagpur in Maharahstra and Ambala in Haryana; courses pursued by our children vary from social work, music, journalism to electronics and telecommunication. In addition, many of our youngsters have also taken up vocational courses in well-known institutes in Chennai, Faridabad, Aurangabad, Pune etc.
Presently, a total of 171 youths (91 boys and 77 girls) are well settled in various walks of life such as nursing, paramedicine, engineering, medicine, teaching, hospitality sector, development sector, sports and physical education, technicians etc. So far, the marriages of 79 adult children have taken place from SOS Latur.

**Family Strengthening Programme (FSP)**

Family Strengthening Programme is a preventive community intervention programme, designed to prevent children from losing parental care and getting abandoned. It empowers children and women from poor and vulnerable cross sections like children of widows, single women or below poverty line families.

The objective of the Family Strengthening Programme is to enable children, who are at the risk of losing parental care to grow within a caring family environment. We empower caregivers and communities to effectively protect and care for their families. This is done in cooperation with local authorities and other service providers. FSP has gained strong acceptance in the local society since people recognize the efforts made by SOS India in shaping the lives of people in need of support.

At present, FSP Latur supports 940 children from 398 vulnerable families of nine clusters. While there are 21 functional Self-Help Groups at present, seven are in process of formation. In addition, we have ten existing Bal Panchayats across all clusters in Latur.

“Every big thing in the world only comes true when somebody does more than he has to do.”

- Hermann Gmeiner
An SOS Mother is the head of an SOS Family. Not only does she share her life with her children, she also provides them emotional security and the chance to develop new, lasting and loving relationships within the SOS Family. All SOS Mothers are assisted by SOS Aunts who help them with their day to day household chores. All mothers in SOS India enjoy motherhood. They live happily with their families and do not consider being a mother as a job.

**Shakuntala Dongre**

Shakuntala Dongre joined SOS Children’s Village Latur as a mother trainee; she was allotted the Namrata House with ten children. Affection of children at the very beginning assured Shakuntala that she had made the right decision. Soon after, she was given a day old baby girl. The little girl was underweight for her age and was not in the best of her health. But, Shakuntala was determined to try her best to improve her health. A few months later, the little girl started to show signs of improvement and eventually, she recovered fully. Today, the girl has grown up and is pursuing in Bachelors in Commerce. In a similar way, Pooja came to Shakuntala’s house when she was 15 days old. She is now studying in class XII.

Shakuntala believes that God gave her the strength to look after her children in the best possible manner. One of the recent challenges that she faced in her journey as an SOS Mother was when she was given five girls three years back. They did not know how to speak Marathi or Hindi and were also not aware about hygiene and good habits. Looking at them this way, she was terrified to even think of managing them. But, her elder daughters Pooja and Poonam helped her to settle these girls well in their new environment and get adjusted with their family members. They all now live happily and are progressing well in their respective lives.
Till now, Shakuntala has raised 30 children out of which, six of her boys and four daughters got married. Whenever she thinks about her life as an SOS Mother, she feels immense pride and feels blessed to have gotten the opportunity to work for this noble cause. She says, “SOS India serves as a great tree under which I spent all these beautiful years of my life. I can sit under this tree happily till my last breath.”
Life in an SOS Children’s Village

To enhance creativity and overall development, we organize extracurricular activities in the village—sports, painting, dance, singing, outings and resilience-building activities. Sports activities like basketball, gymnastics, athletics, boxing, kung Fu, karate and football are conducted with great enthusiasm with regular professional coaching given to children.

Children in SOS India come from differing backgrounds and traumatic experiences. Resilience building activities are important for all children under our care. Further, to help young girls and boys choose the right career path for them, we organize the MI/MN Test in collaboration with JIVA Institute, Faridabad. This test is conducted for children studying in class VIII.

The Village in Latur has a Children’s Club that helps in strengthening the child’s inherent leadership quality. Club members organize various functions and activities in the village in order to get maximum participation of children. In addition, we also have a Learning Centre for all school going children. Most of the children play indoor games and some also participate in local level competitions.
In SOS India, we believe that the best place for children to grow up is with their biological families. Children have the right to enjoy and grow up in a caring environment with love, respect and security. However, there are cases where children face the risk of losing care of their families, especially when their basic material, emotional, health and educational needs are neglected. This occurs when their caregivers lack the capability or the commitment to care for them properly mainly due to poverty, domestic violence, disability, disease or a natural disaster. Keeping this in mind, we introduced a community project through the motherhood programme and then the Family Strengthening Programme (FSP).

FSP empowers families to become self-sufficient and take better care of their children. Family Strengthening Programme in Latur got off the ground in August 2003 with goals of increasing outreach and strengthening motherhood. Our goal is to control child abandonment.

We began our Outreach Programme by providing nutrition and basic education to 45 children belonging to Jainagar, a slum nearby. As for the Motherhood Programme, we identified 30 children from ten families led by mothers who lived in areas close to the village such as the town of Latur, Salegali, Kusthdham and Jainagar. Through this, we provided INR 400-1,000 per child to the mother for education and nutrition of children.

Over time, the focus of the programme was changed; in 2007, it changed to Family Strengthening Programme (FSP). FSP not only caters for the education, nutrition and health of the targeted children but also provides different packages of services i.e. psychological, capacity building training programme etc. for all family members.
FSP Impacts Families

A SWOT analysis was done in order to check the usefulness of the initiative, which in fact did reflect in the Family Development Programme of each family. An example of how the FSP works is given below.

How we do it

An INR of 3,000 was given to each caregiver as initial financial support. Over time, we provided them and all 11 children with educational, nutritional, health and psychological support.

Four mothers joined the Shree Laxmi Self Help Group. They were provided with capacity building and livelihood support in small business development from Maharashtra Economic Development Council (MEDC). They did the 45 day long certificate course on Tailoring (stitching) from Industrial Training Institute (ITI) and learned embroidery, bag making and footwear making through Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK), Latur.
To start off, the FSP gave them INR 36,540 to make petticoat frill at home as a group livelihood activity; they contributed INR 12,000 on their own for the same. A purchase of the necessary machinery for the same was made worth INR 48,540; this was done to provide value addition to the existing stitching work. As a result, an increment in the income of women was seen. Their combined efforts led to various exposure visits of market trends for their product. In addition, they also started a group business named Shree Laxmi Parcal (Petticoat) Business. Purchasing material at wholesale rates, they do quality work, (cutting, stitching and frilling) increasing its value in the market. They now employ five women on a daily basis.

FSP intervention has led to the overall development of the four families. The women are not only more skilled but also bolder, capable and confident. Further, performance of children in academics was also improved over these months.

Thanks to FSP, for the community now perceives these women as their role models and no longer discriminate on the basis of their gender.
a. Education

Literacy rate is one of the internationally accepted indicators of human development. In the 2001 census, it was found to be poor in the area as compared to other districts of Maharashtra. Through local teachers, we generated awareness in villages on the importance of education. FSP in Latur aims at 100% attendance of the targeted children. This year, 89% children have been promoted to higher classes with good marks.

Tuition support

Education depends not merely on the interest of students but on a composite of factors like interest of parents, interest and efficiency of teachers and the learning environment. We kept these factors in mind while establishing six tuition centers with community support. These centers have teachers who regularly coach children in English, Mathematics and Science. We also conduct parent-teacher meetings where they discuss various education related problems in their locality. Teachers are also trained to create socio-economic awareness in the local community.

Major achievements

In the academic session of 2015-16, we had 12 children in classes X and XII who got more than 80%. In class X, Poonam Tompe secured 87.20% and Rahul Yadav 80%. From class XII, Mahesh Survase obtained 71% while Sonal Poddar got 70%. In addition, two children also completed vocational training on mobile repairing and have their own shop. We had zero dropout cases in the age-bracket of 6-14 years in all clusters.

Bal Sabha

We have 16 Bal Sabhas in nine FSP locations with 245 children as members.
b. Nutrition

Nutrition is an input to, and a foundation of health and development. The relationship between infection and malnutrition is well-documented. Better nutrition is a key requirement to beat poverty and a significant step in attaining better quality of life. It makes for stronger immune systems, less illness and better health. At FSP Latur, we fill the gaps seen in nutrition at intervention time. Dietary support was given to 122 children in 2015 and 240 in 2016. Further, we also rehabilitated 105 and 211 children, respectively.

We regularly monitor nutrition through home visits. For the last few years, we’ve conducted periodic awareness classes on child nutrition through external resources. A monthly height and weight checkup is conducted and the results are recorded to monitor the status of malnutrition of children.

c. Livelihood Opportunity

Giving FSP a chance at gaining a viable source of income is our priority. For the last five to six years, we have worked to generate sustainable livelihood in different fields for all our beneficiaries. By now, some of them are employed in private jobs in different institutions and others have begun their own ventures in various areas, depending on their interest and the available resources.

d. Women and Community Empowerment

FSP has taken up special initiatives for women in the last four to five years. Initially, this involvement was intended to give a morale-boost to the poorest of the poor to help them participate in people-centered development. Our first intervention was an attempt to help women from an entire cluster understand the concept of minimum wages and stop child labour through local contractors. Community members were empowered to fight for Record of Rights (ROR). The Vaisalinagar Community members approached the Panchayat for their rights. They did not have ROR in spite of living there for more than two generations. Legal awareness sessions in all clusters have curbed domestic violence and child marriage to a large extent.
e. Partnership

Partnership plays a vital role in the overall development of a community. The initial partnership was made with MCED (Maharashtra Centre for Entrepreneurship Development), where more than 260 vulnerable families underwent training and are now successfully running their business. We had a health partnership with MIT (Maharashtra Institute of Technology) through which, we were able to provide free health check-ups and awareness sessions to the community people. The Nehru Yuva Kendra gave financial support for the three-month training in tailoring for women, wherein over 35 FSP caregivers were benefited; they now run their own tailoring units.

f. Empowerment of Women through SHG Formation

To bolster the socio-economic condition of the family, one must mobilize rural women to form Self Help Groups (SHGs) that can attain social and economic sustainability. So far, we have formed 25 SHGs. All have been in existence for one to three years with savings between INR 14,000 and 85,000.

Internal lending is very common in SHGs. Records of the SHGs are uniform with the recognized standard given by Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM, a governmental body working for women on SHGs). We have improved the confidence of women by giving them capacity building training on leadership development, documentation and concepts. A revolving fund is the major factor strengthening both internal lending and the corpus fund. All SHG members are repaying funds up to 100% to their respective SHGs after three to 27 months of IGA support.

A bigger collection of funds can play a key role in strengthening the economic condition of a group. It eventually pressurizes bank officials to give loans to group members for any economic activity in future. FSP Latur has also begun Group Livelihood with a Masala business. Groups such as Pragati with 12 members are engaged in their own development. A highlight of the group livelihood effort is that they received the certificate of Laghu Udyog from the Maharashtra Government and a certificate from FSSIA (Food and drug administration), Maharashtra.
g. Health Services

*Health Camp:* Sound health is the basis of a happy life. FSP Latur conducts regular health checkups for children and caregivers. Maharashtra Institute of Technology (MIT) is the major source of health support to our caregivers and children.

*Vaccination:* Regular vaccination has been monitored by the local Anganwadi workers in our villages. 90% of children below five years of age are being regularly vaccinated in accordance with the government’s prescribed schedule dates.

*Health Card:* The 157 caregivers who got a health card from the MIT hospital nearby are encouraged to receive support from the hospital through this card.

*Health Awareness Programme:* Through regular health awareness sessions in all clusters, we have improved people’s knowledge of seasonal diseases, skin and scabies, cold and cough, etc. Using precaution and care, the number of such cases have been decreased.

h. Social Security Schemes

For a long time, the government has tried to improve people’s economic condition through different developmental programmes at the grass root level via the ‘Panchayat Raj’. Despite that, a lot of the help does not reach the intended people in time because of negligence by government functionaries. Thus, we initiated a process where we use our own efforts to help people benefit from the various governmental social security schemes. In this way, we provided support to the following caregivers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Widow Pension : 12</th>
<th>Ghar Kul Yojana : 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toilet facilities : 16</td>
<td>IAY : 5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

i. Defining a Child

UN convention on the Rights of the Child states that it is mandatory for all human beings below the age of 18 years to be treated as a child.
The convention has 54 articles and Articles 43-54 detail how governments and international organisations will work to give children their rights. FSP in Latur tried to convey the message of ‘The Rights of the Child’ through different, easy methods so that caregivers and children can learn and share it with others in the community.

**a) Talking about Child Rights in the Local Language:** Articles written in the local language were distributed to each child and its caregivers during different programmes on child rights.

**b) Street Plays:** Easy mode of spreading messages in a community on topics like primary education, girl child education and protection and importance of the birth certificate etc.

**c) Birth Certificates:** We’ve provided birth certificates as proof of their identity to 189 children.

### j. Vocational Training

Supporting children alone cannot free the family from the grip of poverty. Hence, our packages of services cater to not only the targeted children who are studying but also to the caregivers and youth of the family.

Vocational training to youth helps in creating employment opportunities for them and increases the economic condition of youth in general and of the whole family in particular.

### Conclusion

Within the last four years, we have been able to touch the heart of the community near the SOS Childre’s Village Latur through our FSP. We have reached this position because of the constant efforts of all our FSP Co-workers, timely guidance from the Village Director, FSP Zonal Co-ordinator and Zonal Director (West). In addition, we also have been joined in our efforts by different stakeholders: Maharashtra Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (MCED), Department of Education, private institutions, Maharashtra Institute of Technology and local Panchayats and Municipalities among others.
Stories from FBC

a) Archana Jhadav

Archana Baburao Jadhav was brought to SOS Village Latur when she was three and a half years old. She grew up in the loving care of SOS Mother Shobha Khillare of Sadhana House. Archana was always a bright student and even showed traits of leadership. During her Masters in Business Administration (Human Resource), Archana topped in her institute in Pune in the 4th trimester. With shining eyes, she credits it to her special bond with her supportive SOS Mother, who inspired her to aim high in life. A confident young lady, Archana works in Pune and is happily married to Himanshu, who is an engineer. She is a role model for many young girls at the Village.

b) Sonu Jagannath Igve

Losing her parents at the age of five, Sonu came to SOS Village Latur with a younger sister who was three years old. SOS Mother Prafulla Deshpande nurtured her with love and care to turn her into the disciplined, sincere adolescent that she is today. Hardworking and studious, Sonu always helped her mother in small ways. She was in class VIII when she resolved to become an engineer. She did well in class X Board Examinations, which also gave way for her to get her diploma in Polytechnic- Electronics and Telecommunication.

Sonu was the first girl of Latur Village to take up engineering. The favourable environment of her college increased her self-esteem and helped develop her personality; she created her own identity through singing, art and good behaviour and also won many medals in co-curricular activities Sonu got 75% marks in her diploma course, paving the way to lateral entry admission in the Pimpri Chinchwad College of Engineering, Pune. Sonu is a role model for many girls entering adolescence and we wish her continued success and a beautiful life.
Stories from FSP
a) Rekha Barikrao Gavali

Before FSP

The Jainagar Cluster is not far from the Latur Village. FSP ‘Caterpillar’ in Latur has been working for vulnerable families from September 2012 and we support 400 beneficiaries from 176 families under the same.

Rekha Gavli, who lives in Jainagar with her husband and three children is one of our beneficiaries in the FSP. When she came, her financial condition was in a very bad state. Since the beginning of her marriage, she was the only one who took care of her family. Her husband did little work at home and suffered from severe drinking problem. As a result, he would beat up his wife and abuse her in front of anyone and everyone. Depressed Rekha had to occasionally work as a daily wage earner in the farm to manage her household.

After FSP Intervention

FSP in Latur took Rekha on board in 2009. We prepared the family development plan for the family and prioritized their needs. Her children showed low body mass index and poor Rekha did not know how to improve their condition. She felt helpless because of her husband’s alcoholism. Her two daughters and a son are regular and good students at school. The FSP educational intervention increased Rekha’s
interest in her children’s performance at school. Conscious of her own illiteracy, she began to take adult literacy classes from FSP co-workers to refresh her writing and reading abilities. In addition, she also improved her awareness on various important social issues and topics.

The FSP intervention improved Rekha’s livelihood capacity through various certificate programmes; the 45 day ITI Tailoring Course and the Small Business Development Course from Maharashtra Entrepreneurship Development Center. At last, in May 2012, Rekha sought IGA support for a bangle selling business and began selling bangles and other artificial jewelry items. FSP also supported Rekha’s family with child nutrition, education etc. As her income increased, she took support of the FSP to start additional coaching for her children.

Rekha actively takes part in various programmes and workshops on domestic violence and laws regarding women, women’s rights, effective parenting skills, child rights, skill training, self-development training programmes etc. She is also the secretary of the Tulshi Mahila Bachat Gat SHG and saves as much money as she can. Now a confident and a strong person, she plays an active role in supporting her family. Her income is now sufficient to support her family and cater to their needs. Rekha regards the intervention made by FSP as her guiding force and believes that it led her towards the right path in life.

b) Sunita Tapkire

Before FSP

Sunita Tapkire is a widow and lives with her daughter in the Jainagar cluster of Latur, very close to the SOS Children’s Village. Sunita was working as a daily wage worker on seasonal basis at the time when her family was selected to be enrolled in the Family Strengthening Programme. After she lost her husband to Typhoid in 2004, she lived with her mother but could not do so for long because of their poor financial condition. At that point, she was all alone and was very disturbed. She had to take up daily wage work and started earning very little money. Her child was ill fed and was always irregular at school. Sunita herself had completed primary education and wanted to educate her child. She borrowed money from relatives to keep her house going. In October 2009, aid was provided to her by FSP Latur.
After FSP Intervention

On joining the FSP, she did her SWOT analysis and with our input, she made her Family Development Plan (FDP). We gave Sunita the required capacity building and livelihood support along with small Business Development training from MEDC. She joined the Saraswati Mahila Bachat Gat SHG and is now also its President. She has also received NYK training for bags etc. FSP also provided varied support to her family.

In April 2014, she got financial support for the first time of INR 2,500/- and contributed the same amount herself to begin a vegetable-selling business from home. To add to her income, we suggested her to also sell grocery items. Subsequently, we provided a second time support of INR 10,500/- with 30% contribution from her to boost her income. Her daughter is doing well at school and also helps in the vegetable selling business. An intelligent, determined and self-motivated girl, she won the first prize (INR 5,000/-cash and a trophy), for a school project on Water Conservation. She aims to become an IPS Officer.

Sunita’s grocery and vegetable selling IGA fetches a comfortable amount for her family. She no longer does daily wage work. With her savings and the help of her mother, she also bought a two room house, which was a big achievement for her. Sunita is grateful to the FSP for helping in making her way through life.
c) Bebabai Rathod

Before FSP

Bebabai Rathod, her husband Shyam and their three children live in the Sursal (Tanda) Village, 40 km from SOS Latur. The couple’s daily wage jobs generated very limited income out of which, most of it went on food. They found it difficult to provide the family with three square meals a day, hence, education for their children was nothing but a distant dream. The older children were in class X and IX but could not go to school regularly. The youngest son, Shailesh, had an aptitude for learning but the parents could do nothing about it. As it was, Bebabai kept borrowing money to run her house.

After FSP Intervention

FSP in Latur enrolled her in November 2009 and motivated her to join SHGs. She did her capacity building training to improve her skill and awareness in all respects; parenting skill, gender sensitization, importance of education, child rights and child nutrition. We suggested her to ensure that her expenses were lower than her income. Soon after, she joined the Jai Bhim Bachat Gat SHG. In addition, we also gave varied support to her husband and children.

d) Shailesh

Shailesh was asked and encouraged to join the FSP by SOS India. Motivating him to attend school regularly, we also organized for tuition classes in Mathematics, English and Computer Literacy. We increased his awareness through study tours, visits to different educational places in and around the town of Latur, counselling him on the importance of education, how to not bog down amidst board examinations and its preparations, careers, etc. We encouraged him to participate in different competitions at school and in the community.
In 2011, he topped his school with 87% in his Board Examinations; he topped the school and made his village proud! In class XI, he took up science as his stream. He tutors his siblings and also guides 16 children from classes IX and X in his community.

His parents now value education, giving equal importance to their other children. Today, all children are doing well at school. Support from FSP helped Bebabai change her family’s future prospects.

e) Meena Giri

Meena Narayan Giri from Nath Nagar is a divorcee. Besides not contributing in household chores and finances, he also used to fight and abuse his wife; meanwhile, their children were neglected. Failing to cope with her husband, Meena got separated from him and took her two children with her. With the abrupt familial responsibilities and the traumatic separation from her husband, Meena was disturbed.

Meena is calm, helpful and a hard working woman. Initially, she worked as a daily wage helper for making khichdi in a school. She now works at Ganesh Bakery in Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation, which was 12 km away from her place. She used to wake up at three in the night and complete her household work by five in the morning.

Despite all her challenges, Meena always tried to maintain the basic standard of her family. However, her daily hectic schedule left her with little time and money for her children. As a result, her son became irregular in school. He used to waste his time with friends; trying to catch birds, playing cards and engaging in idle conversations. Her daughter was always a sincere...
student. Having studied till class VII herself, Meena wanted to educate her children but struggled to pay their fees. The FSP began to support them from July in 2011.

The FSP intervention provided support to the family in a variety of fields; education, awareness, personality improvement, capacity building, health, nutrition etc. Apart from taking our coaching and training, Meena also did the 10 day Maharashtra Center for Entrepreneurship Development Training.

She joined an SHG and with the support of the FSP, Meena started with additional work of tailoring and stitching. In addition, her children also began to attend school regularly. Meena had thought of getting her daughter married after class XII but the intervention of the FSP changed her mind. Instead of child marriage, she now along with her daughter aimed at a three year diploma in Civil Engineering.

Meena’s daughter Pallavi expressed her heartfelt gratitude to FSP for its support rendered: “I would have not gotten the chance to pursue my higher education and fulfil my dream of becoming an engineer had it not been for the Family Strengthening Programme. I am very grateful to them for their support.”

Now, Meena has begun selling vegetables, too. She has repaid all her loans and is now happy to see her dreams come true. In addition, she plays a vital role in the lives of her children, who are happy and satisfied with their lives.

f) Suman Gaikawad

Suman Gaikawad is a single parent from the SC Community who lives in Kushtadham with three children. Despite working hard, she could not break the grip of poverty; this was before FSP intervened in 2013. The FSP supported her Xerox shop and its activities, which helped her to look after her children in a better manner with the income generated. In addition, Suman actively contributes in the community in any way she can.

With the help of training and capacity building programmes, Suman was motivated even more to work harder. Resource agencies involved in her coaching
increased her awareness about a lot of social issues. Because of being literate, she is also an optimistic and a dynamic member of the Jijamata SHG.

**Contribution to social issues**

Seeing the positive results in her life after FSP’s intervention, Suman wanted to help others in the same way. As a peer educator for the NGO Sahayog, her experience and good work got her publicity and many opportunities. As the Vice President of the Bhim Shakti Sangathan, she helped women and worked towards changing mindsets of people about superstitions and taboos. She also helped to stop children from dropping out of school and worked towards curbing child marriage of over 60 girls. Focusing on sanitation, she cleaned up two bus stands of the Ahmedpur Block; the District Transport Mahamandal even rewarded her for the same.

Suman has also been an Asha Worker. As a worker for the health department, she encouraged rural women’s family planning operations and worked against domestic violence. After completing her Auxiliary Nurse Midwifery, she worked more on other various awareness programmes.

In 2013, she opened the Balaji Sevabhavi Sanstha, an NGO for the empowerment of women. She ran a programme teaching tailoring to rural youth and was also a part time resource person on tailoring in Maharashtra Center for Entrepreneurship Development. To top it all, Suman also has a bus conductor license given by the state of Maharashtra.
Gopal Nayayan Harane did an M. Sc in Biotechnology. He has his own farm in Aurangabad named Samrudhi Environment Care with 50 employees.

Sajid Hamid Pathan did B.A in Economics and M.A in Mass Communication and Journalism. He is now a senior sub-editor with “Divya Marathi”, an Aurangabad newspaper.

Vikas Bapurao Ladkat followed BA in Economics with an MBA in IT and DCA. He is a team leader with Fiserv India Pvt Ltd, Pune.

Sharad Baburao Ladhkat did B.E in Computer Engineering, which led him to a job as a Software Engineer at DPLM Software Solutions Ltd, Hinjewadi, Pune.

Sujata Gajanan Dake did B.Ed and is a teacher in a high school named Rayat Shikshan Sanstha, Kashti.

Dinesh Vyankat Dongare got a diploma as an Optometrist and worked for 12 years at Vishwa Seva Eye Clinic. Now self-employed, he owns the Birala Eye Clinic, Sinner (Nashik district) with three employees.

Shivaji Lahu Bhosale got a Certificate in Hotel Management and was the pantry in-charge at Wipro Technology. After a few years, he began his own hospitality unit employing 37 people. He also acquired a patent for his own ‘Tea’ and has a good turnover in that business.

Joyti Baburao Mali did her B. Ed and is a teacher in a government school in Abmejogai, Beed.

Sindhu Arade completed her masters in social work (MSW) from Karve Institute, Pune and is a lecturer at the Sub-centre of Swami Ramanandtirth Marathwada University, Latur,

Padama Bidwe did a course of General Nursery and Midwifery and works at Yashwantrao Chavan Medical College, MIT, Latur.
• **Komal Shrimant Mane** is a senior accountant with Bhartiya Agro Industries Foundation, Pune after completing her M. Com from Pune.

• **Surekha Devrale** was a slow learner but a good basketball player, representing India at the Special Olympics in Athens in 2011. Despite difficulties, Surekha passed class X (distance education). Thereafter, she took orientation training in Computers as well as tailoring lessons at the Village Tailoring Centre. Surekha was also a good cook, so we supported her ITI training in food and food preservation. An expert in pastry and ‘halwa’ making, she worked for two and a half years as a Pantry Assistant at Hotel Grand International, Latur. She is now married to an insurance professional and lives with her husband and two sons in the nearby District of Usmanabad.

• **Archana Jadhav and Anita Wagh** are the first MBAs from our Children’s Village in Latur. After doing an MBA in Human Resources, both are now HR executives. Archana works with Forge in Pune and Anita works at Juzchire IT Solutions in Hyderabad.
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