

# ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



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## **About the Organization:**

Samata is a social justice organization working for the upliftment of the tribal “Adivasi” people of Andhra Pradesh, India, and for the protection of the natural resources and ecology of the Eastern Ghats (hills). Samata started working in a small tribal hamlet in 1987 with a group of tribal and rural youth, to mobilize tribal communities against exploitation by outsiders and by the government. Samata was formally registered as a non-government organization in 1990.

Our vision is to help build an India in which tribal and scheduled castes, Adivasi groups, the poor, and other disadvantaged minorities can fully participate in a healthy Indian democracy, enjoy the benefits of economic development and retain their rights, their culture, and their history. Our mission is to advocate for the voiceless, to hold the government accountable to its promises, to enable minorities to fully achieve and exert their rights, to promote sustainable development while defending against environmental abuses, and to aid the human development of the disadvantaged. We believe the best way to achieve our mission is through adherence to nonviolence, community empowerment, and adherence to the democratic process. We believe in the possibility for development that advances the cause of social justice instead of undercutting it; in the ability of communities to develop and interact with the environment sustainably instead of exhausting natural resources and destroying ecological systems; in the capacity of tribal communities for self-government and their right to control their land and resources; in the power of an organized and informed community; in the wisdom and the necessity of pursuing our mission through peaceful and democratic means.

### **An Important Milestone: -**

We are pleased to announce that our Executive Director Mr. Ravi Rebbapragada was appointed as chairperson of the working group for framing rules on PESA, Governance, and use of Technology under the state planning commission of the Chhattisgarh government. The long experience of Samata was useful in drafting the rules for the above important task, along with the other members of the working group.

The working group has successfully submitted a detailed report to the state planning commission. We also had the opportunity to meet the Hon'ble Governor, Chhattisgarh, and discuss the implementation of PESA and her role in governing and enforcing the law and rules in the state.



*29th October 2021: Executive Director Ravi Rebbapragada and the team met Honourable Governor Smt. Anusuiya Uikey, Chhattisgarh*

## The Pandemic: Our emergency response:

Samata has been at the frontline to provide relief to the migrant laborers, and vulnerable and marginalized people affected by the covid-19 pandemic. With lockdowns in every state being slowly lifted, and the number of cases and deaths spiking, containing the virus has become even more critical. Samata has been tirelessly working on the ground to provide food, rations, and hygiene kits to the poor, and also performing the important task of creating awareness about the virus and preventing its spread, educating people on social distancing, helping to combat the stigma, providing shelter and setting up community kitchens for those in need.

### A. Distribution of Ration Kits

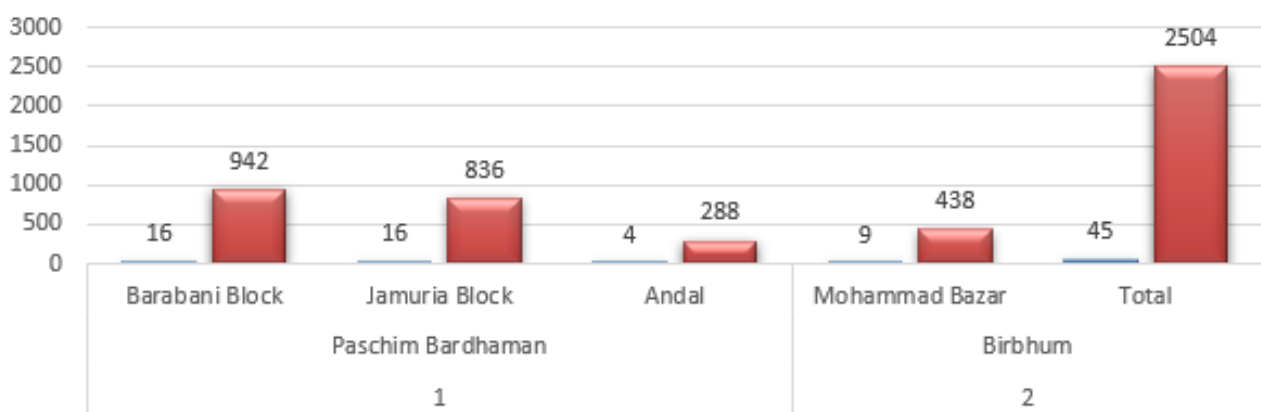
Samata took out a survey in Muslim Colony, Rajak Colony, Adharsh Nagar, ASR Nagar, BNR Nagar, RH Colony and Madeenabagh to assess the needs of those affected during the pandemic due to the loss of work and other losses and catered to the basic needs of the poor and migrant families and distributed dry ration kits to 1036 families in slums of Visakhapatnam city in the year 2021 and 2022.



We have also supported and distributed dry ration kits among tribal communities in 13 villages in Borra panchayat. In addition, Considering the request from a fellow about the bad condition of factory workers, farmers, farm laborers, mining workers, fishermen, transport workers, hawkers, maids, mill workers, and construction workers during the covid-19 pandemic in Barbani block, Jamuria block, Andal block, and Mohmed Bazar block in West Bardhaman and Birbhum dist of West Bengal, Samata immediately offered the support and distributed to 2500 families each receiving ration kit amount of Rs.1350 n the year 2021-2022



### Total Number of families District wise in West Bengal



- Total Number of families District wise in West Bengal Number of Villages
- Total Number of families District wise in West Bengal Number of Families



*7<sup>th</sup> & 09<sup>th</sup> July 2021, Distribution of dry ration kits by Executive Director Ravi Rebbapragada at Borra panchayat*



*Borra Panchayat Community during the distribution of dry ration kits by Samata*



*1st september 2021: Covid-19 Relief dry ration distribution at Birbhum District, West Bengal*

## Fellowship program on Constitutional Values

Because of the covid-19, the communities were affected by it leading to most of the fellows working on the covid-19. Therefore, we conducted six capacity-building workshops with our fellows from 6th to 8th December 2021. We also organized one cross-learning event in Kollaput near Araku valley in Visakhapatnam dist. of Andhra Pradesh where all our fellows from 5 states came and shared their experiences and learning with one another. Individuals, community-based organizations, and local groups in the tribal areas are trying to bring a difference in the areas of education, health, livelihood, human rights, and labor rights. There is an urgent need for supporting and strengthening the efforts of the individuals and the local groups who are working voluntarily on the ground.



Fellowship program on Constitutional Values in India. We are supporting 20 grassroots fellows working at the ground level.

1. Andhra Pradesh
2. Odisha
3. Chhattisgarh
4. Jharkhand
5. West Bengal

## Outreach

Population →

5,56,070

Districts →

26

Panchayats →

100

Villages →

500







The fellows working at the grassroots work on a range of issues related to health, education, employment generation, child rights, human rights, labor rights, women empowerment, and upholding Constitutional values and principles. Samata mentors the fellows as per their needs. We have conducted one cross-learning event to document best practices and learn from each other.

### **Capacity Building workshop**

With the idea of supporting social change makers in the tribal areas, Samata instituted the Social Animators program to support 10 fellows from Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand who wish to bring change and a better standard of living

in their respective areas. Social animators have become the first point of contact for the tribal communities for any grievance that they face. Samata has also organized mentorship and training sessions with the social animators to facilitate their activities.

Considering the gravity of the issue of Polavaram Dam, its immediate effect, and covid-19, four capacity-building workshops on Rehabilitation and Resettlement were organized for the local leaders. In addition, a cross-learning event was organized on 8th September 2021 for the ten animators who came from all the proposed displaced areas.

Furthermore, we also visited the Polavaram Dam construction site and R&R colonies on the 29th and 30th of November, 2021 to extend solidarity and technical support to the communities.



*30th November 2021: Field visit to Polavaram Dam, East Godavari, A.P.*



*20th November 2021: Field visit to Nimalapadu*

## Samata Tribal Desk

Facilitating Gram Sabha: Natural Resource Management and community rights

Acknowledging the low rate of awareness of various government programs among communities, Samata initiated facilitating the gram sabhas at the village level in negotiating the livelihood, sustenance, and income generation from the ongoing tourism or mining initiatives for the communities in scheduled areas. For instance, Nimalapadu calcite mining issues where Samata is helping communities to claim their rights over natural resources as per the law of the land and Samata Judgment.



*28th July 2021: Executive Director, Samata with Community at Nimalapadu, Visakhapatnam*

In addition, in Borra, Samata is assisting the Borra guides association to gain employment in the tourism department. Samata is also facilitating the Gram panchayat to acquire 20% of tourism earnings mandated by the Samata Judgment. We also assist the Katakki Waterfall Development Committee, a community management of the Katakki Waterfall initiative.



*7th January 2022: Samata Team attended Gram Sabha at Borra Panchayat and explained Samata Judgment*



*25th September 2021: Executive Director, Samata facilitating the community regarding the local resource and importance of Gram Sabha*



*28th December 2021: meeting with APMDC at Nimmalapadu, regarding Community rights*



*Ex. Sarpanch of Valasi panchayat Krangi Dharmanna, requesting miners and APMDC not to acquire their land for mining*



*April 2022, the Tribal community demanded to include Pedamallapuram, Sankavaram Mandal, of East Godavari District in the Vth Scheduled area.*

On 18th November 2021, International Children's day was organized and celebrated in MPP tribal school in Sargudu village of Nathavaram Mandal of Visakhapatnam dist and Tribal Welfare Ashram School in Daddugula, Nathavaram Mandal in ESR dist. of Andhra Pradesh



*18th November 2021: International Child Rights Day at MPP School, Sarugudu, Nathavaram mandal, Visakhapatnam*

On 26th November 2021, the constitution day was organized by our fellow and celebrated with students and teachers in Government Zilla Parishad School in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.



*26th November 2021: Celebration of Constitutional day at ZP High School, Yandada, Visakhapatnam*

## **Education:**

SAMATA is also supporting tribal students in their higher education. We have supported one tribal boy in doing his B.Sc in Agriculture at PDM University. An amount of Rs. 1,44,000 was supported to the student by Samata. Five tribal girls from Borra panchayat were facilitated to join Nursing course. In addition, we also are providing the tribal student with information on the new courses, scope, and resources available for higher education.

In addition, Samata has financially supported one Ph.D. student from TISS, Hyderabad who has also carried out a small study on the rehabilitation of Polavaram oustees.

## **Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas**

A meeting was organized on the issue of PESA on 20th January 2022 at Valasi Panchayat regarding the mining issues in their areas. A detailed discussion on mining and its impact was discussed and explained to the communities by the Samata Team



*20th January 2022: PESA meeting at Valasi panchayat regarding mining*



*8th March 2022: on the eve of International women's day, a meeting was conducted with the Self Help Group at Katiki village, Borra Panchayat, Ananthagiri Mandal, Visakhapatnam*

## Research

Samata had also undertaken a study on the extractive industry and its impact on communities, especially the tribals living in and around the mining areas. We have also published a chapter in the seminar magazine "Extractivism during Covid-19."

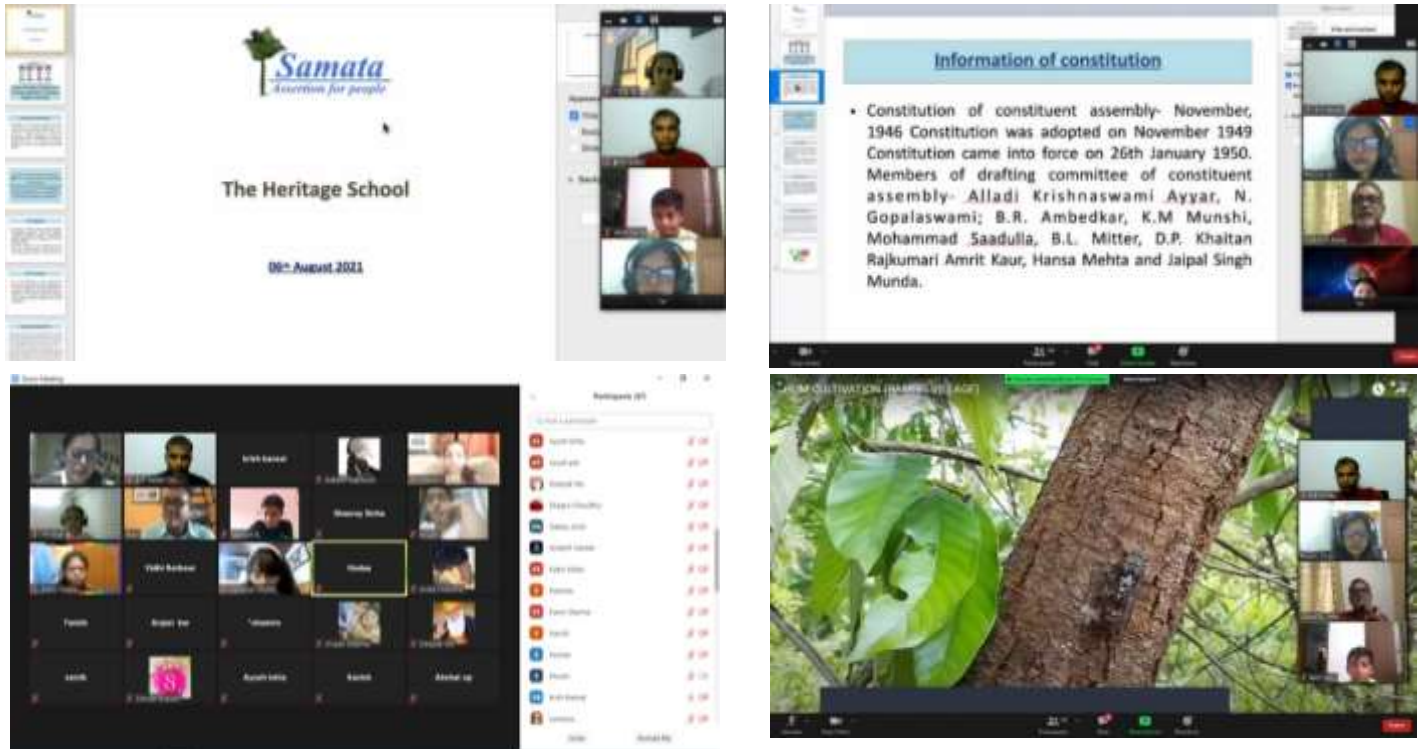
We have been appointed as chairpersons in the working group for framing rules on PESA, Governance, and use of Technology under the state planning commission of the Chhattisgarh government. We have successfully submitted a detailed report to the state planning commission. We also met the Hon'ble Governor, of Chhattisgarh and discussed the implementation of PESA and her role in governing and enforcing the law and rules in the state.





## 8. Special Lectures

The Heritage school, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi approached Samata to undertake a series of online classes for its students on tribal areas, scheduled tribes, law and constitution. During this year, several classes were held on the subject by our executive Director



On International Human Rights Day, a special guest lecture was organized and invited by GITAM on Human rights and Modern Slavery (forced labor), our Executive Director, Ravi Rebbapragada delivered a lecture on the said subject. It is pertinent to note that Samata has been working on human rights and modern slavery for more than 5 years now and has a track record of rescuing and freeing bonded and child laborers from brick kilns in southern states of India.

We also participated in the Universal periodic review, organized by the Ministry of External Affairs in association with National Law University, New Delhi. We presented the problems of on vulnerable communities in particular scheduled tribes.

Furthermore, Samata has also organized a meeting on the proposed amendment of the Forest Conservation Act (Amendment), 2021 and its possible impact and repercussions on the people.

## **Way forward:**

This year SAMATA enter its thirty third year of work with the tribal and rural communities of the Eastern Ghats and across India in general. SAMATA has achieved many milestones in all these years and has built a credibility with various stake holders.

The pandemic was a difficult time. It did help us focus on the issue of migrant workers and their difficulties. Samata has added this portfolio to its work and have been successful in rescuing hundreds of trafficked & migrant workers, including children. We also realise that we need to upscale our work with children and youth as they are the future. Another emerging area is lively hoods and community managed income generation programs.

There is an ever increasing need to work on the constitutional values and rights of the tribal communities as there is pressure on their land and resources for development. Therefore, Samata shall continue to provide all kinds of support and advice to the communities in the framework of law as per the constitution of India.