

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



Contents

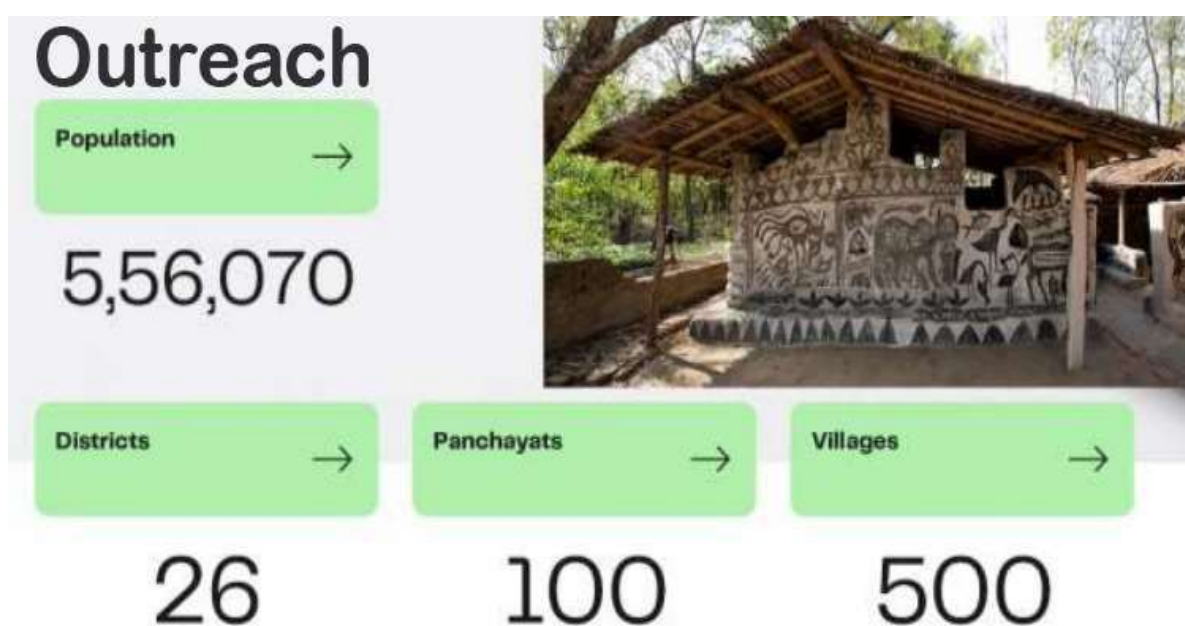
1. About the Organization.....	0
2. National Gathering on Tax Justice in mining Areas	0
3. Solidarity support to community opposing mining	0
4. We20: Peoples' Summit on G20:	0
5. Awareness campaign on community rights to claim Rehabilitation and Resettlement among Polavaram oustees.	
6. Facilitating implementation of PESA, identifying enabling conditions required to stimulate and realize PESA in Scheduled areas.....	
7. Meeting in Selected villages.....	
8. Awareness Meetings in ASR and Anakapalli District.....	
9. Status of T Sub-Plan Areas.....	
10. Facilitating implementation of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 for the people affected by Polavaram multi-purpose dam in Andhra Pradesh, India.....	
11. A workshop on rehabilitation and resettlement in Polavaram.....	
12. Facilitating implementation of Forest Rights Act, 2006.....	
13. Capacity-Building workshop for tribal youths on violation of constitutional rights of tribes.....	
14. Awareness meetings on the side-effects of obtaining mineral extraction.....	
15. Dialogue with Govt and Govt. Officials on the issues of violations and constitutional rights of tribes	
16. Protecting the identity and culture of the tribal population.....	
17. Rescue operation of bonded labour and child labour labour from brick kiln industry in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in India.....	
18. Campaign against child and human trafficking.....	
19. Registration of migrant brick kiln workers under the Building and Other Construction Worker Act, 1996.....	
20. Solidarity Campaign for Palestine.....	

21. World Indigenous Day.....	
22. Motivational and Educational Counselling sessions for Tribal adolescents in high schools	
23. Tribal youth motivation and counseling junior colleges.....	
24. Debate, Painting and Essay Competition in colleges.....	
25. Volley Ball and sport kits distribution among school and colleges students.....	
26. Hospitality and book keeping training for KWDC in Katiki, Borra.....	
27. Cross learning exposure visit to promote Eco-tourism.....	
28. Motor Vehicle training for tribal youths.....	
29. Crafts Training for tribals youths	
30. Recent Developments and Challenges.....	
Way Forward.....	

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.



➤ **National Gathering on Tax Justice in mining areas in India**

A 3-days national gathering on Tax Justice in mining areas in India was organized on 2nd October 2023 by Samata in Rayagad district of Chhattisgarh state in India. The main objective was to bring out the issue of tax justice in mining areas among the communities affected by the mining activities in India. The gathering was participated by more than 200 community leaders, activists, lawyers, women, children and people from various walks of life affected by mining activities. Tax justice in mining areas in India is a significant issue, as these regions often face challenges related to transparency, accountability, and equitable distribution of revenues generated from mining activities. The gathering discussed various aspect of mining including tax justice, district mineral fund, air and water pollution issues in mining areas, and forest issues. The programme highlighted the issue of tax evasion and tax justice



Tax evasion and avoidance practices are highly prevalent in the mining sector in India. Companies, very often than not, underreport their profits, manipulate transfer pricing, and engage in other aggressive tax planning strategies to minimize their tax abilities. Therefore, it is extremely important for the communities affected by mining activities to know about the tax evasion and claim their rights.

➤ **Solidarity support to local community opposing mining**

In the year 2023, The Dist Collector, Alluri Sitha Rama Raju dist held a public hearing for the proposed calcite mining in Nimmalapadu village, Valasi panchayat, Ananthagiri mandal, Alluri Sitharamaraju district. Samata team represented and highlighted the importance and relevance of Samata Judgment and PESA Act of 1996, emphasizing that non-tribals can not engage in mining in Fifth Schedule áreas, but tribal cooperatives can. They also asserted that according to the PESA Act, only tribals have rights to local minerals and resources. Following representations from Samata and the local community, the Joint Collector cancelled the public hearing for the mining.



- **We20: Peoples' Summit on G20**, a three-day event organised by over 70 organisations from different parts of India in the national capital of Delhi with an effort to bring people's voices to the forefront and raise their issues and concerns for a more democratic, just and inclusive financial system and political order. Samata also was one of the organizers.

Over 700 delegates from different parts of the country, representing people's movements, trade unions and Civil Society Organisations came together at the Inaugural program that saw participation from Teesta Setalvad, Medha Patkar, Jayati Ghosh, Manoj Jha, Harsh Mander, Arun Kumar, Brinda Karat, Hannan Mollah, Rajeev Gowda among others. The 6 workshops, on issues ranging from Global Finance, Big Banks, and its Impact on People, Right to Information, Digital Data and Surveillance, Climate Change & India and G20 witnessed speakers including Jairam Ramesh, former environment minister, Vandana Shiva, Anjali Bhardwaj, Amrita Johri, Nikhil Dey and others.



- **Awareness campaign on community rights to claim Rehabilitation and Resettlement among Polavaram oustees.**

Awareness campaigns were conducted in 63 selected villages in 12 Gram Panchayats about the rights of the people. In the villages of Agraharam and Seetharam, meetings were organized with the renowned justice advocate Putta Rambabu to discuss the rights of the people. A total of 7000 person participated from 63 villages in these meetings. These meetings focused on educating people about the rights of the indigenous tribes. Meetings were organized and awareness was raised among women regarding their legal right. Pamphlets were also distributed among the communities to raise awareness about the rehabilitation and resettlement issues.



➤ **Facilitating implementation of PESA, identifying enabling conditions required to stimulate and realize PESA in Scheduled areas**

Meetings and awareness sessions concerning the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act were conducted across various villages and districts in Andhra Pradesh. These initiatives aimed to disseminate information about the rights and provisions outlined in the PESA Act and address issues related to its implementations.

1. **Meeting in Selected villages:**

A total of 63 villages, spanning 12 Gram Panchayats in two districts of Andhra Pradesh, were selected for organizing meetings on the PESA Act. Over the course of one year, these meetings saw participation from approximately 15,000 individuals. Notably, in Manturu village, an awareness session with Hon'ble Justice Putta Rambabu was organized, attracting 76 attendees from affected villages



2. **Awareness Meetings in ASR and Anapalli District:**

In ASR and Anapalli districts, awareness meetings on PESA were organized in 93 villages, along with regular Gram Sabhas to discuss issues pertinent to scheduled areas. These sessions addressed topics such as land rights, forest rights, and community concerns, with active participation from local tribal youths.



3. **Status of T Sub-Plan Areas:**

In Prathipadu, Sankavaram, and Routhulapudi mandals, comprising 56 tribal villages, efforts have been ongoing to include these areas in the Scheduled Area. Despite their historical reliance on forest resources and government schemes, these areas have been considered non-scheduled for an extended period. The community's request for inclusion in the 5th schedule area faced challenges due to various factors, including land ownership issues involving non-tribals.



➤ **Facilitating implementation of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 for the people affected by Polavaram multi-purpose dam in Andhra Pradesh, India:**

A series of meetings were organized in 63 villages on the R&R under The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. In these meetings, 18,000 individuals participated. Discussions on the following subjects took place. 1) Immediate compensation for youths over 18 years who have been affected. 2). Consideration of empty dates as the cutoff date. 3) Land for land: In villages like Agraharam, Enugula Gudem, Nagalapalli, and Paragasanipadu, 4. compensation for pending oustees .5). Implemenation of livelihood amenities and other basic amenities and cpnstruction of connectivity roads discussed in the sessions.

These meetings served as platforms for affected individuals to voice their concerns and advocate for their rights under the R&R Act, aiming to ensure fair compensation, transparent processes, and effective resettlement and rehabilitation measures.

➤ **Workshop on rehabilitation and resettlement in Polavaram**

A workshop on rehabilitation and resettlement was organized on 16th February 2024 by Samata in Polavaram areas to create awareness among the local leaders, activists, journalist and the communities affected directed or indirectly by the Polavaram multi-purpose dam about the provisions in rehabilitation and resettlement policy under **The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2013**. The workshop was participated by more than 50 participants from 12 panchayats from 3 mandals of ASR and Elluru dist of Andhra Pradesh. The main provisions for R&R in the LAAR Act, 2013 were discussed in details and explained to the participants in the workshop.



Furthermore, with the selected 63 villages, a WhatsApp group “POLAVARAM BADITHA KUTUMBAALU” is being launched with the initial member of 129 educated tribal youth to exchange/ share important information among the members to address the issues collectively.

➤ **Facilitating implementation of Forest Rights Act, 2006**

Meetings were organized in 12 Gram Pamchayats on the issue of fair implementation of the Forest Rights Act of 2006. Prior to the acquisition of land for Polavaram multi-purpose dam, 1500 individuals had obtained titles under Forest Rights Act, 2006, however; none of them received

compensation or land-to-land benefits. Even in the 38 villages where VSS titles were issued, the authorities did not initiate actions for both VSS and Compensation lands. Pending applications need to be resolved.

➤ **Capacity-Building workshop for tribal youths on violation of constitutional rights of tribes**

In the past year, we trained youths from 63 submerged villages in Polavaram areas on key acts like the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, Forest Rights Act, 2006, and PESA, emphasizing indigenous rights. These trained youth actively participated in official Gramsabhas organized by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. They raised crucial questions about beneficiaries' cut-off dates, house allotments, existing house estimations, and other rehabilitation concerns. Additionally, residents from 20 villages submitted applications involving 252 acres, addressing issues related to R&R packages and land-to-land matters with the tehsildar.

➤ **Awareness meetings on the side-effects of obtaining mineral extraction.**

Awareness meetings were organized on side-effect of mineral extraction for the community leaders, activists, and communities in 56 villages in Sarugudu panchayats in Chintapalli mandal of Asr dist of Andhra Pradesh. Environmental degradation, biodiversity, land, water, and air pollution, degradation of fertile land due to extraction of minerals etc were discussed in details with communities.

➤ **Dialogue with Govt and Govt. Officials on the issues of violations and constitutional rights of tribes**

Around 25 dialogues and meetings have been conducted with collectors, revenue Development Officers, sub-collectors, Tehsildar (MRO) on the issue of exclusion of schedule villages from schedule area and merging them with Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority and violation of constitutional rights of tribes in Nathavaram mandal in Ankapalli dist and Chintapalli mandal in ASR dist of Andhra Pradesh. Communities have meeting continuously meeting the authorities to remerge those villages in the schedule area. However, the issues need to be resolved in the coming times.

➤ **Protecting the identity and culture of the tribal population**

Meetings and workshops have been organized on tribal identity and culture in 56 villages covering four mandals and two district. The main objective behind organizing the meetings and programmes was to preserve the tribal culture by instilling the tribal cultural values among the tribal youth, encouraging them to practice their language, traditional attire and culture.



➤ **Rescue operation of bonded labour and child labour labour from brick kiln industry in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in India:**

Samata has been working on the issues of human trafficking, forced/bonded labour, child labour, and migration governance to ensure safe migration among the marginalized communities, especially communities belonging to Adivasi and Dalit in Odisha. In the last one year we have rescued more than 2000 bonded labourers and child labourers from brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states in India.



➤ **Campaign against child and human trafficking:**

We have launched a campaign against child and human trafficking visiting villages, organizing meetings and creating awareness on the risk of trafficking and promote safe migration among the migrant brick kiln workers in the source state of Odisha's Balangir and Nuapada dist of Odisha, India.



- **Registration of migrant brick kiln workers under the Building and Other Construction Worker Act, 1996:** Facilitating registration for labor card (employment card for migrant brick kiln workers under BOCW Act, 1996 essential for accessing social security and other benefits) are ongoing process. Facilitating the workers in filling up registration form, document collection, facilitating PRIs (Executive officer, GRS etc.) to provide proof of employment for the workers for their registration. Documentation for registration of around 3003 have been done in the last year.



- **Solidarity Campaign for Palestine:** A solidarity event was organized on 23rd November 2023 in jr. college in Ananthagiri mandal of Alluri Sitha Rama Raju dist in Andhra Pradesh involving students to extend solidarity support to the fighting people of Palestine and sending a strong message to the world that tribal student of Andhra Pradesh are strongly standing with the people of palestine.



➤ **World Indigenous Day:**

On August 9, 2023, Samata celebrated the International Day of the World's Indigenous with the students of AP tribal Welfare residential school in Tokuru panchayat in ASR dist of Andhra Pradesh. The even featured a speech by Mr. Ravi Rebbapragada on Samata judgment along with staff members. On the eve of World Indigenous Day, Samata along with students planted trees in and around the school and the panchayat office compound. The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is celebrated annually on August 9 to recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples and to highlight the challenges they face. The 2023 theme was "Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-determination".



➤ **Motivational and Educational Counseling sessions for Tribal adolescents (900) in 6 high schools (8,9,10 classes)**

A series of counseling and motivational sessions were organized for tribal students in six high schools across Ananthagiri, Paderu, and Araku Mandal of ASR district. These sessions aimed to enhance the academic abilities of the students, providing them with valuable guidance and encouragement. The initiative focused on addressing the unique challenges faced by tribal students, fostering a supportive learning environment, and equipping them with the skills and motivation necessary to excel in their studies. The program received positive feedback from both students and educators, highlighting its potential to significantly improve educational outcomes in these communities.



➤ **Tribal youth motivation and counseling 5 junior colleges (750 Nos)**

A comprehensive motivation and counselling program was organized for 750 tribal college students across five junior colleges in Ananthagiri, Paderu, and Araku Mandal of ASR district. The initiative aimed to empower tribal youth by focusing on essential topics such as goal setting, educational

planning for a better career, pursuing higher education after completing the +2 level, and choosing the right academic courses. Through a series of interactive sessions, students were provided with personalized guidance and strategies to set realistic and achievable goals. The program emphasized the importance of education as a tool for personal and professional development, encouraging students to make informed decisions about their academic and career paths. Participants reported increased clarity and motivation regarding their future educational and career aspirations, reflecting the program's success in addressing the specific needs and aspirations of tribal youth in the region.



➤ **Debate, Painting and Essay Competition in colleges:**

Samata organized a series of Debate, Painting, and Essay Competitions across five colleges in Ananthagiri, Paderu, and Araku Mandal of ASR district. These events aimed to foster creativity, critical thinking, and effective communication among the students. The debate competition encouraged participants to engage in thoughtful discourse on contemporary issues, enhancing their public speaking and analytical skills. The painting competition provided a platform for artistic expression, allowing students to showcase their creativity and interpretative abilities. The essay competition focused on developing writing skills and the ability to articulate ideas coherently. These competitions received enthusiastic participation and highlighted the diverse talents of the students, contributing to their overall personal and academic growth.



➤ **Volley Ball and sport kits distribution among school and colleges students:**

Samata distributed sports kits to students in five colleges across Ananthagiri, Paderu, and Araku Mandal of ASR district. The initiative aimed to promote physical fitness and team spirit among the youth. The volleyball tournament saw active participation from numerous students, fostering a sense of healthy competition and camaraderie. Alongside the tournament, Samata provided sports kits, including volleyballs, nets, and other essential equipment, to ensure students had the necessary resources to engage in sports activities regularly. This effort was well-received, with students and educators appreciating the focus on physical education and the holistic development of the youth.



➤ **Hospitality and book keeping training for KWDC in Katiki, Borra**

Samata organized specialized training sessions in hospitality and bookkeeping for the Katiki Waterfall Development Committee in Katiki village, located in Borra panchayat. This initiative aimed to promote eco-tourism and enhance the livelihoods of local communities. The hospitality training focused on improving customer service skills, ensuring visitors receive a warm and professional welcome. Concurrently, the bookkeeping training equipped participants with essential financial management skills, enabling them to maintain accurate financial records and manage their resources effectively. These efforts are expected to boost eco-tourism by improving the visitor experience and ensuring sustainable business practices, thereby providing a steady income stream for the local population. The training sessions were met with enthusiasm and optimism, reflecting the community's commitment to leveraging eco-tourism for economic development.



➤ **Cross learning exposure visit to promote Eco-tourism :**

Samata organized a cross-learning exposure visit to Kollahaput Resort, Lambasingi Waterfalls, and other notable eco-tourism sites. This initiative aimed to promote eco-tourism and reinforce the community's rights over natural resources.

Participants, including local community members and stakeholders, had the opportunity to observe and learn from established eco-tourism models. The visit highlighted sustainable practices, effective resource management, and the benefits of community-led tourism initiatives. By showcasing successful examples, the program aimed to inspire and empower local communities to harness their natural resources responsibly, enhancing their economic prospects while preserving

environmental integrity. The exposure visit was well-received, with participants gaining valuable insights and motivation to implement similar eco-friendly tourism strategies in their regions.



➤ **Motor Vehicle training for tribal youths :**

Samata organized motor vehicle training for tribal youths from Borra panchayat to provide them with valuable skills to enhance their livelihoods. The training program focused on equipping participants with comprehensive knowledge of vehicle maintenance, repair, and driving skills. This initiative aimed to improve employment prospects for tribal youths by opening up opportunities in transportation and related sectors. The hands-on training sessions included both theoretical and practical components, ensuring that participants gained a thorough understanding of motor vehicle mechanics and safe driving practices. The program was well-received, with participants expressing increased confidence in their abilities to secure sustainable employment and improve their economic status.



➤ Crafts Training for tribals youths

Samata organized crafts training for 30 tribal youths from Borra panchayat of ASR district, Andhra Pradesh, aiming to enhance their livelihoods through skill development. The training program focused on traditional and contemporary craft techniques, including weaving, pottery, bamboo basket, water bottles, jewellerys, bamboo flowers and beadwork. Participants received hands-on instruction from experienced artisans, learning to create marketable products that reflect their cultural heritage. The initiative sought to empower tribal youths by providing them with the skills needed to generate income through craft production and sales. The program was met with enthusiasm, with participants expressing confidence in their ability to improve their economic prospects and preserve their cultural traditions through their newfound skills.



➤ Recent Developments and Challenges:

Recent developments include the submission of Gram Sabha resolutions by the local Panchayat secretary, indicating the community's reluctance to be included in the 5th schedule due to non-tribal land ownership. This issue has prompted legal action by local community and women groups, leading to a case being filed in the high court.

Conclusion: The efforts to raise awareness about the PESA Act and advocate for the inclusion of tribal villages in scheduled areas have encountered both successes and challenges. While significant strides have been made in informing communities about their rights, unresolved issues such as land ownership complexities continue to impede progress. Addressing these challenges will require concerted efforts from both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the PESA Act and uphold the rights of tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh.

Way forward:

Moving forward, Samata will continue to focus on expanding its advocacy efforts for tax justice in mining areas, strengthening livelihood programs through skill development and market linkages, promoting sustainable eco-tourism initiatives, facilitating the implementation of tribal rights legislation, enhancing educational and youth engagement activities, intensifying environmental conservation efforts, prioritizing emergency response and human rights protection, preserving tribal culture, fostering collaboration and partnerships, and maintaining a holistic approach to empowering tribal communities and advancing social justice.