

2015-2016

Annual Report



SAMATA India

2015-2016

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About the Organization

We are a social justice organization working for the rights 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 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 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.

Executive Director's Message

Major Activities

Eye Camps at Nimalapadu

Samata in association with Shankar Foundation Eye Hospital, Simhachalam, Vizag conducted a one day eye check-up camp in Nimalapadu Village. Nimalapadu is a village in Valasi Gram Panchayat of Anathagiri Mandal, Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh. Geographically the villages in Valasi Gram Panchayat fall on slopes of Eastern Ghats Hills. These tribal dominated villages have poor access to pucca roads, schools, hospitals etc. Samata has been working relentlessly in providing basic facilities to the people in these villages. Samata has successfully conducted an eye check-up camp in Nimalapadu in 2014.



This year the eye check-up camp was held on 16th November, 2015 at Girijan Primary School in Nimalapadu. Along with Shankar Foundation Eye Hospital, Utkarsh Foundation

Hyderabad and Rajaana Foundation, Visakhapatnam also came forward to support the activities of the camp. 220 people from 7 neighbouring villages spreading across 3 Gram Panchayats registered for the camp. From the total number of people screened, based on the results, 75 people were given eye drops and medicines. 43 patients were given spectacles with lenses. One patient was operated for optical iridectomy and two patients have undergone B-Scan. 20 patients were diagnosed with Cataract. These patients were sent to Shankar Foundation Eye Hospital for the operation on 17th November 2015. They were discharged from the hospital on 19th November and sent back to their villages. A follow-up check-up was organised on 21st November in which 18 patients attended.



The eye check-up camp at Nimalapadu was a success with more than 200 people receiving information and treatment relating to various eye-sight problems.

Children on the move

Vizianagaram

An awareness drive on child rights was organised in Bobbili Mandal in Vizianagaram by National Environment and Education Development (NEED). The awareness drive was supported by Samata, Nava Jeevan Bala Bhavan and TDH. Mr. P Venugopala Rao was the Chief Guest at the event. He is the Executive Director at NEED. In his opening address, Mr. Rao highlighted the importance and need for child rights. He stressed on the fact that it is very important for the parents to realise the importance of education and send their children to school. This is the only way the issue of child labour can be mitigated.

The meeting was next addressed by Mr. Satish, Co-ordinator at Samata.

He spoke about the Gurukul Model of Education. He also spoke about the Child Helpline number-1098 which should be used by the teachers, parents and other civil society members if they find any



child in hazardous conditions. The meeting was next addressed by Mrs. B Vijaya Lakshmi, School Head Master. She spoke about the amenities available in the school. The Government is putting in effort to provide the basic amenities but parents still prefer sending their children to private schools.

Awareness rallies took off in Salur Panchayat. The rally was joined by nearly 100 people displaying placards on child rights to education, good health etc. The rally also witnessed anti-trafficking and anti-child labour slogans. A similar awareness rally was carried out in Bobbilivalasa and Pachipenta.



Visakhapatnam

Samata has conducted a Random Sample survey in three pockets of Visakhapatnam, 1. Ramurthypeta under the flyover bridge, Kancharapalem 2. Alluri Sitaramaraju Nagar, Tatichetlapalem 3. Benta colony, Adavivaram. 128 children were selected for the survey from the three places. The survey reveals that most of these children have migrated with their parents from various parts of state and also from other states. These children belong to poor socio-economic background. Some of the children are school dropouts and are working as child labour in various industries etc. From the survey it is clear that out of 128 children, 47 are school dropouts which is around 37%.



Keeping these statistics in mind, Samata in Association with Power NGO, conducted a child rights protection campaign at Madhavadhara High School on 27th September, 2015. The school has high percentage of students who come from migrant families. The Campaign was addressed by Circle Inspector of Police of Kancharapalem P.S Sri. Raghu Veer Vishnu, S.I Sri. Sateesh who spoke on various child related laws, its impact and results. Following this another awareness campaign was organised in Benta Colony. Child Welfare Committee Member T.V Laxmi and Counselor Mr. R.Naresh were invited to address the children. The aim of the campaign was to generate awareness about various Government provisions, polices and mechanisms to protect the child rights. Another mass level campaign was organized at Sontyam Z.P High School, on 10th Oct 2015. This school has 60% girls and most of these girls are victims of child abuse and child marriage. The campaign was attended by the school children and MEO of Anandpuram. The campaign was aimed at sensitization of children against child sexual abuse and child marriages.



Katki Issue

Katki is one of the major tourist village in Borra Gram Panchayat. The Katki Waterfalls is a major tourist attraction. Hundreds of tourists flock Katki every day. In the light of this tremendous inflow of the tourists, the local people in consultation with the government officials and Samata decided to build a toll gate. Samata helped local people to register a society called Katki Abhirudhi Seva Samiti under the Societies Act. This society collects money from the motorists depending on the kind of vehicle and uses this money for the welfare of the village. Few months ago a group of people who were against the fee collection took this to newspaper accusing the villagers of looting the tourists. The news became a big issue and the district collector issued an order to immediately remove the toll gate. This was a major setback for the people who based their livelihood on this. Samata took up this issue and wrote to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs stating that the livelihood of some of the people was based on this and it was unethical for the government to destroy the toll gate. The forest area belongs to the tribals and hence they should be given some rights over their land. The money that they collect is very minimal and that money is also used for the cleanliness of the place. With relentless effort by Samata, the Ministry agreed to rebuild the toll gate. Following this

the District Sub-Collector, Paderu suggested the renaming of Katki Abhirudhi Seva Samiti to Katki Waterfall Development Committee (KWDC). He has issued an order saying that, 'KWDC has been appointed for operating and management of the Toll-Gate erected across the clay road leading to Katki waterfalls subjected to conditions'. The Sub-collector has issued some guidelines in order for smooth functioning of the Toll-Gate. Following this order, Samata organised awareness campaigns to educate the local people of Katki about the guidelines issued and how they should work within those guidelines. Samata also took up the initiative to select some members of the KWDC and give them training relating to maintaining accounts, receipt books, bills etc. at the Samata office.



Another major issue that haunts Katki is that the village does not have pucca road to the nearest PHC. In case of emergency as well, people have to walk for 6km to reach the PHC. The local people with the help of Samata have put proposals for constructing a road that would connect them to the nearest hospital. But this process has challenges as the people who run taxi service for tourists to go to Katki waterfalls are opposing the construction. They fear that if the road is constructed then they will lose on their business as people can go in their vehicles to the waterfalls. But most of these taxi drivers are non-tribal's from the neighbouring villages. The tribal's from Katki do not benefit from the business as well they do not road connectivity. This issue has been taken seriously by Samata and has been drafting proposals to built the road.



World Indigenous Day at Borra

The United Nations 'International Day of World's Indigenous People' is observed on August 9th each year with an aim to promote and protect the rights of Indigenous people. This year the International Day of World's Indigenous People was celebrated in Borra Panchayat with the formation of Samata Youth Club. The club was formed in order to empower youth in areas relating to their rights, education, health etc. Samata also organised a walk from Borra Girijan Ashram Patashala to Borra Caves to celebrate the indigeneity of the people and the surroundings. At Borra Caves school children took oath to protect their forests and their natural resources.



mm&P Support

mm&P's national level General Assembly was conducted in Baba Amte's Ashram at Anandwan in March 2015. In this General Assembly, Mr. Ravi Rebbapragada was elected as the Chairperson and Mr. Ashok Shrimali as the Secretary General of mm&P. In July 2015, the first Executive Council meeting was conducted in New Delhi to plan for activities for the year ahead. As decided in the Executive Council meeting, state level meetings were organised in Ranchi, Raipur, Bhubaneswar and Asansol in October 2015.





With concerted effort of the chairperson and the Secretary General, mm&P is now a member of the Global Alliance representing South Asia. An international gathering of mining affected communities was organised in Manila, Philippines from July 30th to August 1st 2015. This meeting was attended by Mr. Ashok Shrimali. Mr. Ashok Shrimali also attended the movement organised by 'Bhumi Adhikar Andolan' which was against the amendment (through ordinance) to the LARR Act, 2013.

State level consultations were organized in 8 states vis-à-vis Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu and Telangana. The consultations were organized after apprehensions raised by the members of the alliance on amendments to MMDR Act of 1957 were made in MMDR Act 2015 and the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana. The consultation meetings focused on the issues of illegal mining. The Community Resource Guide was released during the meeting and the screening of the Documentary Film, 'Falling Through the Cracks: Children in Mining Areas' took place. The importance of Future Generation Fund was also discussed. The various provisions of the DMF were also discussed.

Following the meetings the proposed activities have been decided for 2016-2017,

- Information dissemination on status of DMF for each state including the functional rules
- To conduct meetings and consultations at various levels of administration on mining related issues especially focusing on children and women
- To actively reach out to youth organizations for a more wider participations in debates on issues plaguing the local communities
- To continue disseminating relevant information to tribal communities
- To continue the Tribal Desk and organize the legal resources required by mm&P members and also to support newer tribal initiatives
- To facilitate EC meeting of the alliance and plan for General Assembly in early 2017
- To establish National Secretariat office at New Delhi

- To facilitate travel and representation of mm&P at various national and international forums

State Level Consultations

Telangana

State level consultation meeting was organised on 24th January at Nainasari Conference Hall, Mancherla, Telangana. The meeting began with detailing out the agenda of the meeting. It was first addressed by Mr. Ravi Rebbapragada who spoke about the remarkable case of Samata judgment. He spoke about the provisions of Samata Judgment which ensures rights to the tribals on their land in the Scheduled areas. Mr. Ravi then released the Community Resource Guide and then, 'Falling Through the Cracks: Children in Mining Areas' Documentary was screened. Following the screening, Mr. Ravi addressed the meeting on the need to consider the issue of mining effects on children and environment together and not in isolation.

The importance of Future Generation Fund was addressed by Mr. Ashok Shrimali. Mr. K.V Pratap who is the Executive member from Telangana spoke about the issue of illegal mining in Telangana. He highlighted the illegal sand mining due to presence of big rivers in the state.



Andhra Pradesh

State level consultation meeting of mm&P was organised on 16th March at Visakha Public Library, Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. The meeting was first addressed by Mr. Ashok Shrimali on the issue of mining in the state of A.P. Then Mr. Ravi addressed the meeting on the importance of Samata Judgement. Community Resource Guide was released by EAS Sharma, Rtd. IAS, Dr. Neeraj and Dr. Nalini. Following this the documentary, 'Falling Through the Cracks: Children in Mining Areas' was screened. Dr. Sridhar Ramamurthy highlighted the issue of illegal mining in A.P. He said there are about 1lakh mining operations happening in the state, but only about 14,000 mining operations are legal. Mr. Sridhar then put forth his apprehensions over the benefit the people in the mining affected areas would receive

through the amended Act. There was a possibility of the mining companies not spending the amount on community from their funds after contributing to the DMF.

Later Rahul Bose from Goa foundation gave his presentation on Illegal mining in Goa in last 8 years. He said a PIL was filed in Supreme Court on illegal mining in Goa and Supreme Court banned the mining in Goa. Former Union Secretary E.A.S. Sarma said people should agitate to retain the mineral wealth for themselves, with government as the trustee, since it was people's wealth. Laws were being changed to suit the corporate sector and even the V Schedule to protect the Girijans was no exception.



Gujarat

A State-level consultation meeting on the District Mineral Foundation, illegal mining, and rights of children in the mining areas, was organized on 27th February at Adivasi Sahitya Academy, Pat village of Sagbara Taluk, Narmada district in Gujarat. Mr. Ashok shrimali presented on the issues of mining, the status of mining in Gujarat. In 2013, 6023 cases of illegal mining were registered in Gujarat. Illegal mining is quite rampant in the state capital, Gandhinagar, which tops the list of districts in the incidence of illegal mining.

Community Resource Guide book was released by Former Member of Parliament Mr. Amarsinhbhai Chaudhari, Senior Researcher Fr. Lancy Lobbo and veteran social activist Dr. Kanubhai Kalsaria. To raise the issue of rights of the children in mining areas mm&P showed a 20 minutes long documentary film name is "Falling through the cracks- children in mining areas". Mr. Rahul Basu presented on future generation fund in the context of Supreme Court direction in the case of Goa foundation v/s State of Goa.

The session was then open for the participants to raise their issues. Fr. Lancy Lobo, Senior researcher raise the issue of displacement in the name of development projects like industrial projects, dams, roads, mines, power plants and new cities to achieve rapid economic growth. He spoke about how displacement dismantles existing modes of production, disrupts social networks, causes the impoverishment of many of those uprooted, threatens their cultural identity, and increases the risks of epidemics and health problems. Mr. Ashok chaudhari secretary Adivasi Ekata Parishad, said that displacement carries not only the risk of human rights violations at the hands of state authorities and security forces but also the risk of communal violence when new

settlers move in amongst existing populations. Mr. Kanubhai Kalsaria raised the issue of illegal mining in coastal belt of Gujarat especially near Gir National park and Arabian coast. There are number of cement industry units actively mining of lime stone legally and illegally also. Following this, community is losing inherent rights on the pasture lands. Human Rights violations are majorly observed. RTI activist Mr. Amit Jethava was killed by the mining mafia. Environmental degradation and drinking water is also a major issue.

Bihar

A State-level consultation meeting on the District Mineral Foundations and Funds, illegal mining, and rights of children in the mining areas was organized on 14th march in Patna .

Santosh Upadhyay who is the Bihar state executive member spoke about the illegal sand mining. He said that the state of affairs is so bad that the on the permit to take one lorry of sand, the mafia are taking 10 lorries of sand. The state has seen bloodshed over the lucrative sand mining rights, he said, at least 300 people have been killed in turf wars between different criminal gangs in the past five years. The illegal sand mining trade is estimated to be worth between Rs 7,000 crore to Rs 8,000 crore and the state government does not even earn 10 per cent of it. Mr. Ravi then spoke about the plight of Samata and how the judgement is necessary to tackle the issue of mining. Rahul Bose from Goa foundation gave his presentation on Illegal mining in Goa in last 8 years.

Ex HRD Minister Mr. Sanjay Paswan stressed on the application of Samata Judgment all over the state.

Himachal Pradesh

On 17th April, a state level consultation on District mineral foundation, illegal mining and rights of children in mining areas, was organized in town hall, Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh. Mr. Guman Singh, EC member from Himachal Pradesh gave detailed out the agenda of the meeting. The Meeting was first addressed by Mr. Ravi on the provisions of Samata Judgement.

Nishant Alag from Environics Trust spoke about rules of District Mineral Foundation. He described the rules and its implication. He also told about Pradhan mantri khanij kalyaan yojna.

Other participants spoke about the on-going struggle against four lanes in Mandi district. Land acquisition is at an all time high for various developmental projects without any proper compensation or due consultation with the affected communities.

Rajasthan

On 22nd February, 2016, State-level consultation meeting on the District Mineral Foundations and Funds, illegal mining, and rights of children in the mining areas was organised in Kisan Bhawan, Girwa panchayats, Udaipur, Rajasthan. Community Resource Guide was released Bansilal, Sadhana Meena, Ashok Chaudhari, Velaram Ghoghara.

In the meeting, the occupational hazards of mine worker were highlighted by the local groups. Mining activities are unsustainable, unscientific, and of unorganized nature, hence the mine workers are exposed to a number of occupational hazards including the onset of life-threatening diseases and crippling physical injuries resulting from the lack of adequate health-care and safety measures. Increasing number of people are being diagnosed with silicosis. Illegal mining in Aravalli ranges even after the ban imposed by the apex court continues unabated.

Tamil Nadu

A State-level consultation meeting on the District Mineral Foundations illegal mining, and rights of children in the mining areas was organized on 5th February at ICSA Program Centre, Chennai in Tamil Nadu. Mr. Ashok Shrimali said that, Tamil Nadu is the leading holder of country's resources of vermiculite, magnetite, dunite, rutile, garnet, molybdenum and ilmenite. The State accounts for the country's 81% lignite, 75% vermiculite, 69% dunite, 59% garnet, 52% molybdenum and 30% titanium minerals resources.

Mr. Deme raised the issue of violation of child rights in mining areas. He said these children are not getting any kind of facility like health care, education etc., neither the Ministry of Mines nor the Ministry of Women and Child propose solutions to the problems.

Other members present at the meeting highlighted that the proposal for phase II of Neyveli Lignite mines is underway and is proposed to acquire 58,000 acres of land when the compensation for land in the phase I has not yet been settled. The phase II is expected to displace 300 families. There is wide spread flaunting of rules. The over burden from the mines is spilling on agriculture lands making them uncultivable. There is an increase in the number of cases related to skin and respiratory problems caused due to dust from mining. Interestingly the mine itself is fully mechanized and does not employ any individual.

Karnataka

A State-level consultation meeting on the District Mineral Foundations illegal mining, and rights of children in the mining areas was on 20th February at Hotel Pola Paradise, Bellari in Karnataka. Mr. Ravi spoke about illegal mining. The illegal iron ore mining in Bellary case, a report by Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India said the illegal mining committed during 2006-11 in three districts of Karnataka (Chitradurg, Hospet & Tumkur) has resulted in the state losing revenue of Rs 3414.45 crore and the government could recover only Rs 7.22 crore.

The other members resent highlighted that, highlighted the plight of traditionally marginalized Devadasi women and their daughters. They are facing multiple forms and levels of discrimination and abuse, some of them have lost their land through land grab or misguided information regarding mining and land purchase procedures. They have reported of being sexually exploited by contractors and other migrant labors due to their vulnerable position of being devadasi women. Their daughters are pulled out of school due to poverty and caste discrimination and forced into child labor and sexual labor. A memorandum to this affect has been submitted to the Governor and the Chief Minister of Karnataka, no positive response thus far.

AnRak case at NGT

Illegal Bauxite mining in the Schedule V areas of Andhra Pradesh has been a major issue of concern. Samata has been working from over two decades to protect the rights of the tribal's who are affected by the mining activities. Over the years Samata has created a repository of resources on the bauxite mining issue. Samata has facilitated people's movements opposing the setting up of AnRak Aluminium Ltd (AAL). AAL completed the construction of the Alumina refinery three years ago. The Government has issued orders, GO MS number 222 (August 13, 2008), 289 (October 30, 2008) in which approval to the draft bauxite supply agreement was given to AAL. The Government issued mining clearance in Schedule V areas. The local people with the support of Samata have advocated for their rights and opposed the bauxite mining by the private firm. Because of sustained pressure by the tribal people and the civil society, the government was forced to cancel the GO. As per GO MS number 44 issued by the industries and commerce department on April 6, 2016 the state government has cancelled orders issued in GO MS number 222 (August 13, 2008), 289 (October 30, 2008).

Borra Panchayat Land Deeds

The 5th Schedule of the Indian Constitution provides protection for the tribal people living in the scheduled areas from alienation of their lands and natural resources to the non-tribal's in



that area. The Supreme Court's judgment in 'Samata vs. State of Andhra Pradesh' popularly known as Samata Judgment declared that, 'all land leased by Government and its agencies to private mining companies apart from its instrumentalities in scheduled areas are null and void. Even after the Supreme Court's Judgment, the land title deeds in the Borra Panchayat were not given to the people. Following this Samata and people of Borra filed further litigations to

get their rights. After 23 long years of struggle, Samata could get the district administration to take action and grant land title deeds to the people.

NIRD Resource Person

Ministry of Rural Development, Government of Andhra Pradesh has conducted a training workshop for Intelligence Officers in Andhra Pradesh state on issues of illegal mining. The training was held at National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad. Mr. Ravi Rebbapragada was invited to conduct an awareness session on the issue of illegal mining at the training.

Meeting at Visakhapatnam Railway Premises

Samata in association with Youth Service Centre, Bolangir, had organised a one day meeting on 29th December 2015 at Visakhapatnam Railway Premises to sensitize the railway personals including Railway Protection Force, Platform Vendors, Coolies and other individuals on the issue of child migration and child trafficking. The Meeting was addressed by eminent personalities on how to find out that the child is a victim of child trafficking, what measures should be taken to rescue the child, who should be contacted in case the child is found to be alone on the platform etc. The details of Child Helpline numbers was also given to the people. The meeting ended with the formation of the Child Protection Committee as per the advice of the Railway Board at Visakhapatnam. The Committee is responsible for the actions further.



