VIDYA DHAM SAMITI
Social Justice and Equality



Annual Report 2023-2024

Vidya Dham Samiti

Message from Vidya Dham Samiti

Dear Friends,



This year, Vidya Dham Samiti completed 23 years since its establishment.When we began our journey in 2001, we were a small group of like-minded young people with a strong commitment to bringing positive change to the lives of marginalized and vulnerable communities in Bundelkhand. Looking back today, 23 years may seem like a short period, as there is still much more to learn and accomplish. Working alongside some of the most neglected and marginalized communities has given us many valuable experiences. This journey has been filled with learning, empathy, and humility.

In 2005, we established a community-based organization. Today, more than 10,000 people from over 70 villages are associated with the organization. Through this platform, we work to raise awareness among people who are deprived of their rights and entitlements, support communities in coming together around development issues, promote mutual learning, and encourage the conservation of natural resources. The women and youth leaders of the organization are truly the torchbearers of these initiatives. Their struggles, courage, and commitment have shown a new direction for social change.

Through this report, we are pleased to share with you the key achievements of the year, the collective strength of the community, and inspiring stories of change. Through these words and images, we seek to highlight the strength of people who are often considered “weak” by society, while in reality, they are among the strongest agents of change.

Warm regards,

Team, Vidya Dham Samiti

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About the Organization

Vidya Dham Samiti (VDS) is a non-governmental development organization (NGO), registered in 2001 under Section 21 of the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The organization's registration number is 566/2000-01. The organization is also registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976, with FCRA Registration No. 136280028. In addition, the organization is registered under Section 12A of the Income Tax Act, 1961. The organization's PAN number is AABTV0379A.

Establishment of the Organization

Vidya Dham Samiti was established in 2001 by a young and dedicated social worker, Raja Bhaiya, along with a group of like-minded young people. Their objective was to work towards the social and economic development of poor, marginalized, and neglected communities in the Bundelkhand region.

Since its establishment, the organization has continuously evolved and has been working effectively on issues related to the rights of poor and marginalized communities, access to government schemes, and social justice. The organization has built a strong and credible identity among local communities, voluntary organizations, government administration, and regional media. Several innovative initiatives and public welfare programs undertaken by the organization have also received prominent coverage in national newspapers and magazines.

Vision of the Organization

To improve the social and economic status of marginalized communities and establish a balanced, sustainable, and harmonious relationship between human beings and natural resources.

Mission of the Organization

To empower people through awareness, community organization, and guidance so that they can better access their rights and government schemes. The organization also works towards promoting good governance and creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

One-Year Impact

Grain banks were established in 10 villages, ensuring access to food grains for families in need.

873 families were connected with various government schemes, including housing, pensions, ration, employment, and other entitlements.

Community organization expanded to 70 villages across Banda district.

842 people were made aware of their rights and entitlements through trainings, conferences, and educational exposure visits.

An initiative on sustainable farming was started with 114 families, promoting environmentally friendly and sustainable agricultural practice

780 people were reached through climate change awareness campaigns, increasing awareness about the impacts of climate change and the importance of environmental protection.

63 young people were connected with employment opportunities.

10 Community Education Centres were operated, enabling 463 children who were deprived of education to access educational opportunities.

Access to government schemes increased for 932 people from marginalized communities

Our Area of Work

Vidya Dham Samiti works in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh, covering 30 villages and focusing on issues related to health, education, livelihoods, climate change, and social justice. Women, Dalits, marginalized youth, and children deprived of education are at the centre of the organization's initiatives. We believe that aware and informed citizens are better able to claim their rights, participate in decision-making, and live a life of dignity and respect.

Community Efforts Ensure Access to Roads, Water, Employment, and Ration



Residents of Rajaram Purwa village in Mahua Block of Banda district were deprived of basic facilities such as road connectivity, drinking water, job cards, and ration cards until 2023. The lack of these essential services had a direct impact on the lives of the villagers. The absence of a proper road made transportation difficult, affected children's access to education, and created numerous challenges in carrying out daily activities. Due to the lack of job cards, several families were unable to access employment opportunities under MGNREGA, while the absence of ration cards deprived poor families of food security and access to subsidized food grains. For several years, the villagers approached the concerned government departments to seek solutions to these problems, but their efforts did not yield the desired results. Subsequently, in June 2023, with the support of community leaders, the villagers collectively raised their concerns before the administration and demanded appropriate action. The sustained efforts of the community and its leaders brought the issue to the attention of the district administration. Local media also highlighted the issue prominently, which helped ensure prompt administrative action towards resolving the problems.

Workshops on Government Schemes



Regular Rights and Entitlements Workshops are organized to raise awareness among community members about their rights and various government schemes. These workshops provide information on schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Public Distribution System (PDS), MGNREGA, pension schemes, and government health and education programmes.The workshops also provide detailed guidance on application procedures, eligibility criteria, and the responsibilities of concerned government departments. As a result of these initiatives, many families have been connected with government schemes, while communities have also been able to effectively raise their demands for roads, hand pumps, Anganwadi centres, and other basic facilities. Through these workshops and training sessions, 873 people were connected with various government schemes and supported in accessing their entitled benefits

Climate Change Awareness Campaign

In response to the growing impacts of climate change, awareness campaigns were organized across 17 villages, reaching 780 people. The objective of these campaigns was to raise awareness among community members about environmental challenges, their adverse impacts, and ways to prevent and mitigate them. During the campaigns, meetings, discussions, and dialogue sessions were organized with rural communities. Key topics included the importance of tree plantation, water conservation, protection of natural resources, and reducing the use of plastic products. Participants were also informed about practical actions and behaviours that can be adopted at both the individual and community levels to protect the environment and promote sustainable practices.



Empowering Farmers Towards Organic and Sustainable Farming

To encourage farmers to adopt environment-friendly and low-cost agricultural practices, Vidya Dham Samiti organized a training programme on organic farming at its office, with the participation of 114 farmers from 20 villages. During the training, farmers were provided with detailed information on the benefits and limitations of both chemical and organic farming. The sessions also covered methods of preparing organic manure, maintaining soil fertility, natural pest management, and techniques for practicing sustainable farming at low cost.

Village-Level Meetings



Monthly village-level meetings were organized to identify the problems and needs of rural communities and to develop collective strategies for addressing them. During these meetings, local community leaders facilitated discussions on community rights, empowerment, and development-related issues. The meetings provided a platform for community members to openly discuss their concerns, identify priorities, and work together towards solutions. Through these meetings, a sense of unity, cooperation, and collective leadership has been strengthened within the community. People have also become more confident and better equipped to raise their rights and development-related concerns effectively.

Community Education Centres



In rural areas, many families are compelled to migrate in search of livelihoods due to economic difficulties. This has a significant adverse impact on children's education, resulting in many children dropping out of school or being deprived of educational opportunities. To address this issue, children who were deprived of education were identified through community meetings and door-to-door outreach. Subsequently, Community Education Centres were established in 10 villages, where children received regular educational support and opportunities for learning. As a result of these efforts, 463 children were brought back into the mainstream of education and are currently continuing their studies regularly. This initiative has not only strengthened children's learning abilities but has also increased awareness among parents about the importance of education.

Success Story

1. Rajesh, a resident of Bhujiyari Purwa village, depends primarily on agriculture for his livelihood. For the past 2–3 years, he had been struggling with financial difficulties and the burden of debt. He was forced to take loans due to illness in the family and unexpected household expenses. Continuous crop failures and low agricultural yields made it difficult for him to repay the loans on time, further worsening his financial situation. This situation also had a significant impact on his mental well-being, leaving him feeling stressed, anxious, and discouraged. During this difficult period, Archana, a field worker from Vidya Dham Samiti, came into contact with Rajesh. During their conversations, he openly shared his financial and family-related challenges. Archana connected him with Vidya Dham Samiti and provided him with regular counselling and support. She encouraged him to return to farming and motivated him to adopt modern and improved agricultural practices. The organization provided him with improved-quality seeds, necessary fertilizers, and technical guidance on farming from time to time. With this support, Rajesh regained his confidence and developed a renewed sense of hope and motivation. Gradually, he overcame his mental stress and began farming with greater dedication and determination.



2. Pappu Verma, a resident of Narsinghpur village, belongs to a farming family. His father, Lotan, aged 70, had been ill for a long time, and the family had accumulated a debt of approximately ₹1 lakh for his medical treatment. Pappu owned 6 bighas of agricultural land, which had been mortgaged against a bank loan. He had been using chemical fertilizers extensively in his farming, which significantly increased the cost of cultivation while yields remained low. As a result, he gradually lost interest in farming and began experiencing severe stress. His family's financial



condition also deteriorated considerably. During this difficult period, a Vidya Dham Samiti field worker visited Narsinghpur as part of the project activities and met Pappu. Pappu shared all his financial and family-related difficulties. With the support of Vidya Dham Samiti, he received regular counselling and guidance. He was encouraged to continue farming and was provided training on the preparation and use of organic manure and sustainable farming practices. The organization maintained regular contact with him and continuously motivated him. Gradually, Pappu regained his confidence, overcame his depression and began practicing organic farming with renewed commitment. As a result, his crop production improved significantly, enabling him to repay his debt. Today, Pappu has fully embraced organic farming. His progress has also inspired other farmers in the village, who are now becoming interested in adopting organic and sustainable farming practices.

Our Gratitude

Vidya Dham Samiti extends its heartfelt gratitude to all the communities, women and youth leaders, partner organizations, well-wishers, donors, and government departments who have continuously supported our efforts through their cooperation, guidance, and trust. We would especially like to express our sincere appreciation to the communities who, despite facing numerous challenges, have actively participated in this journey of change and demonstrated the power of collective leadership, unity, and determination. Their commitment and participation are the true driving force behind our achievements.

Your support, trust, and partnership have strengthened our efforts towards achieving the goals of social justice, gender equality, community empowerment, and sustainable development. We believe that in the coming years, we will continue to work together to build a more just, equitable, and empowered society and carry forward our collective efforts towards meaningful and sustainable change.

With sincere gratitude and heartfelt thanks to all our partners, supporters, and community members.