

Sharda Mahila Vikas Society (SMVS)

Registered as: Society | **Founded:** 2002

Head Office Location: Jhagadia

Region of Impact: Jhagadia, Gujarat

Annual Budget (2012-13): INR 1.3 Crore (216,700)

Adolescent Girls Budget (2012-13): INR 5.6 Lakhs (9,400)

Staff Strength: 28 full time; 16 volunteers



Overview

SMVS was established with the objective of empowering women to achieve their potential through economic and skill building activities. This philosophy came from SMVS' parent organization – SEWA Rural, which has been working on health and rural development issues in Jhagadia since 1980. Over time, SMVS' scope expanded to focus on health, nutrition, education and social issues facing women, adolescents and children. The organization addresses these issues in the remote tribal villages of Jhagadia block in Gujarat.

Adolescent Girls Program

SMVS' adolescent girls program started as a natural evolution from its activities focussed on women. The program focuses on providing adolescent girls with appropriate knowledge and guidance in the following areas as they transition from childhood to adulthood:

- Increasing iron intake to prevent anemia
- Improving personal hygiene practices
- Increasing awareness about the hazards of addictive substances such as Gutkha
- Improving menstrual hygiene practices
- Increasing awareness about sexual harassment, and how to deal with it
- Generating awareness about the importance of staying in school

Model

- SMVS implements the program in schools as well as directly in the communities where adolescent girls reside
- The in-school approach focuses on awareness generation on the abovementioned topics – awareness sessions are conducted during school hours for 8th, 9th, 10th grade girls
- The direct-in-community approach combines awareness generation with the provision of services such as:
 - Conducting blood tests for anemia
 - Distributing iron & folic acid tablets
 - Providing absorbent cotton cloth for menstruation
 - Counseling victims of sexual abuse
 - Providing personal hygiene kits
- SMVS selects Peer Educators from the community to provide these services and conduct weekly follow up over a period of three years
- Additionally, SMVS mobilizes support from parents and village leaders for adolescent girls' issues



Milestones

- 2008-09: Received Champaben Gondia Award
- 2012-13: First scientific paper on menstrual hygiene published in international journal Reproductive Health Matters (May 2013)

Impact to Date

- 1,476 girls impacted through awareness sessions and service provision
- 26% reduction in anemia
- 93% girls consume iron & folic acid tablets regularly
- 89% girls wash their hands with soap after going to the toilet

Theory of Change

If women are empowered, then healthy and happy communities can be created. Hence, if women are organized into groups, trained in economic and skill building activities, and their children are provided awareness on health and education, then women and their future generations are empowered to realize their potential.

Growth Plans

SMVS currently works in 32 schools and 5 villages in Jhagadia block. Over the next three years, SMVS plans to expand its Adolescent Girls Program to 50 schools and 5 new villages. In addition, the in-school approach will expand to cover girls in grades 11th and 12th. SMVS will also introduce a new implementation approach – Training of NGOs in which the organization will identify local non profits focused on adolescent girls and train them to implement its program.

Overall, SMVS' adolescent girls program will reach out to 1,800 girls in the coming three years and empower them with appropriate guidance on health, education, and rights.

	2012-13 (a)	2013-14 (e)	2014-15 (e)	2015-16 (e)
Total Org Budget (INR Lakhs)	130	160	200	220
Total Adolescent Girls Budget	5.6	8	12	14
No. of Adolescent Girls	1,400	1,476	2,000	2,500

Leadership & Management

SMVS' team of 28 full time staff and 16 volunteers is led by Founder and President, Dr. Lata Desai. Lata is a pediatrician by training and was a founding member of SEWA Rural, Jhagadia. The Coordinator for the adolescent girls program, Dr. Shobha Shah, is a public health professional with several years of experience in reproductive and child health programming.

Partnerships

SMVS works closely with village/district level government stakeholders such as ASHA, ANM, ICDS staff, District Education Officers and Child Resource Centre staff to implement the adolescent girls program. Going ahead, SMVS is planning to partner with other non profits in Gujarat to train them in its adolescent girls curriculum so the program can be scaled rapidly.

Funders

SMVS raises funds from CSR departments of companies working in the Jhagadia industrial estate, individual philanthropists and small foundations. Major donors include Galaxy India, Share & Care Foundation and SEWA Rural. A large portion of the funds (80%) are generated through SMVS' revenue generating activities such as *papad* making, garment making, etc.