South Orissa Voluntary Action

Annual Report 2010
(April 2009 - March 2010)
South Orissa Voluntary Action (SOVA) is a non-profit, secular organization working for the past 15 years in Koraput, one of the poorest districts in Orissa, India. We empower the most disadvantaged members of society, especially women and children, to better their own lives through healthcare, education, governance, livelihood and disaster relief. Our participatory process motivates tribals to work together to fight poverty, exploitation and discrimination so they can one day become free and equal members of society.

Our journey began in 1993 when the tribal people of Koraput were displaced by the construction of the Upper Kolab Hydroelectric Dam. People who had been living for centuries along the reservoirs were forced to move much further uphill, where the land was not as suitable for agriculture and lacked other natural resources like forests. As a result, the infrastructure and institutions of the tribals fell apart.

The displaced people were grappling with the difficulties of starting over again when we stepped in. We motivated them to form groups to discuss issues, fight for their rights, plan for their future and regain their sense of community. Over the years, we’ve continued to add programs and build strong, trusting relationships with the communities we serve.
Dear partners, friends, and colleagues,

During the past year, the number of people in Koraput district affected by SOVA’s programs was the highest to date. This was due to expansion of existing programmes and introduction of new programs and partners. We’ve made tremendous strides toward the empowerment of women, children, and communities.

**Women empowerment**
The front line workers continued to strengthening the self-help groups (SHGs) in the project areas by facilitation access to government schemes. By the end of the year, more than 140 SHGs were credit linked. Support for empowerment of women was a focus; the SHGs were actively associated with implementation of the mid-day meal (MDM), public distribution system (PDS), rural water and sanitation, malaria control, and other programmes for the betterment of women and children.

**Child empowerment**
Children in 184 children’s clubs across the district continued to work alongside our staff to generate awareness, mobilize communities, and promote child rights. Children’s education and child rights (children participation and protection) dominated our thoughts and remained a cross cutting theme across all our initiatives.

**Community empowerment**
The NREGA Act 2005 provided a channel for SOVA staff to empower entire communities to obtain work for a fair wage and for the development of their community. As a result, 2,370 families have received an average of 42 days of work in the past year.

We take this opportunity to thank all of you for being a part of SOVA. It is you, our supporters—donors, partners, communities, children, and staff—make our success possible. The following pages will undoubtedly make you realize the tremendous impact you are having on the communities. And for that we thank you and look forward to your continued support as we continue to make a better society for the people of Koraput district.

With regards,

Sanjit Patnayak
Secretary, South Orissa Voluntary Action (SOVA)
15 health camps were organized for pregnant women, and Health checkups were provided to 2120 women.

3,000 women attended a breast feeding rally to raise awareness of the benefits of breast milk.

56 pregnant ladies were trained on proper home-based child care.

25 dustbins and 36 soak pits were built to reduce mosquito breeding.

500 mosquito nets and 1,000 bottles of neem oil were distributed to 178 villages.

In the 28 program villages, 77% of children are receiving proper immunization care.

In the 28 program villages, 26% of deliveries were in institutions.

In the 28 program villages with an anti-malaria program, there has been a 25% decrease in malaria cases.

SOVA gave 3,000 rupees to each of 12 self-help groups. The money is for emergency care of mothers and children.
**PD Hearth Program:** The Positive Deviance (PD) Hearth nutrition program begins with a positive deviance inquiry, during which community members identify the feeding practices of neighbors who have well-nourished children. A hearth is established as a venue where trained volunteers assist parents in preparing meals and snacks for their malnourished children, using the beneficial, locally-available foods that were identified through the positive deviance inquiry. The 12-day program contributes to rapid improvement in children’s nutritional status, as well as better long-term feeding practices by caretakers at home. Last year, SOVA worked with ICDS centers to complete the program with 370 children in 25 villages. 50% of those children moved up one or more nutrition grades during the program. Training to 100 ICDS centers in Koraput district has prepared the centers to conduct the PD Hearth program independently in the coming year.

**Malaria Prevention:** 500 mosquito nets and 1,000 bottles of neem oil were distributed to self-help groups (SHGs) in 178 villages. The SHGs will sell the nets and then purchase more. The program ultimately results in a social marketing opportunity and empowerment of the women.

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**Case Study**

Dhanurjaya Paraja, a farmer and small shop owner of Koraput Block suffered from chronic malaria. His improper dosing of Chloroquine resulted in multiple relapses, preventing him from going to work and earning a living for his family.

When SOVA began malaria education activities in his village, Dhanurjaya got involved. He participated in a small meeting where village volunteers demonstrated protection measures like mosquito nets, neem oil and smoke pots and as well as proper Chloroquine dosage.

Now, Dhanurjaya is practicing what he learned in his own home and hasn't contracted malaria in over 6 months (and running). In addition, he has volunteered to be a malaria resource person in his community, educating his fellow villagers on malaria prevention and treatment.
384 truck drivers were oriented on basics of HIV and AIDS, now they are able to train their friend on prevention of HIV.

6 red ribbon clubs were formed in 6 colleges of koraput Dist and around 350 students are the members.

192 village health functionaries (ASHA, AWW, ANM) were oriented on basics of HIV and started referring people for testing.

11 PLHIV were supported financially for income generation activities.

24 health camps were organized; 1,260 patients were treated; 2 persons tested HIV+.

A youth mela and workshop was held on World AIDS Day (1st Dec) focusing on reducing stigma and discrimination.

300 health information kits for peer educators were distributed.

56 PLHIV were assembled to discuss strengthening the district level network.

3 youth melas were organized; 202 youths participated and received Knowledge on HIV and AIDS.

72 street plays reached 14,000 people to raise awareness and reduce stigma and discrimination.
Achievements

**Peer education:** Training peer educators has proven to be an effective method of distributing information and changing behaviors among youth and adolescents. In the past year, 50 youth and adolescents were identified and trained. 150 college students were trained and then reached 800 peers. The total number of peer educators is now more than 800. In the past few years, condom use and voluntary testing among youths have each increased by 20%.

**Development of balaka and balika mandala:** The youth clubs unite adolescents and youths in a village and create a platform for safe discussions about HIV/AIDS and sex, especially for girls. The groups also discuss social issues such as employment, village violence, and government schemes. This past year, 8 new groups were formed and 48 were strengthened. Two clubs arranged NREGA job cards for all households in the village, three clubs focused on condom promotion, and one club was named the best club in Koraput district for HIV/AIDS awareness.

**District-level network:** To fight against discrimination and advocate for health rights, SOVA facilitated development of a district-level network for PLHIV. The network has 100+ members (45% female) and is managed independently of SOVA. They have applied for a drop-in centre in Koraput and about 50% PLHIV currently identified in Koraput district are receiving their monthly pensions.

**Baseline survey:** To measure future impact, baseline data was collected by interviewing all households in 166 villages, 10 driver associations, 10 cashew factories, 30 PLHIV, 500 adults, and 750 youths.

Case Study

Lalita Huika is a 22-year-old tribal girl from the village of Kochiakonadi, 35 km from Koraput. She is fair, gentle, and shy. Her family encouraged her to continue her education after high school, so she’s the most educated person in her village. In 2009, SOVA was looking for a dependable female peer educator. Other youth in Kochiakonada recommended Lalita, because of her helpful nature and her education. However, she was reluctant, because she believed that discussing HIV and sex was not a good activity for a girl and that people may say negative things about her. After several request from her friends, Lalita finally agreed to become a peer educator, along with two of her friends.

She participated in seven days of training on HIV basics and life skills. She says that the programme was very useful. She was shy, but the training programme developed her leadership qualities and gave her confidence to talk to the village about HIV and sex and sexuality. She united the village girls by forming a balika mandal, or girl child club. She has taken part in other training programmes where she gained knowledge on different government schemes. She is now educating her friends and fellow villagers about HIV and government schemes and developing pressure groups in her villages to mobilize government resources.

Lalita says she is the luckiest girl in her village because of her loving parents and brother. She says that because of their support, she has never felt discrimination in education opportunities, clothing, or participation, like other girls she knows. Her family allowed her to become a peer educator, and now she is one of the most knowledgeable persons of her village.
The Writing Reading Improvement Program (WRIP) is a supplemental system for children who are behind. 19 WRIP centers cover 423 children (223 boys and 200 girls).

9 WRIP centers covering 197 children have introduced math cards.

SOVA formed 40 child clubs involving 2,174 boys and 2,271 girls.

Child clubs were taught about child rights, child protection, including disabled peers, and decision making.

To discourage dropouts and irregular attendance, child clubs are directly involved in child tracking.

Science resource centers have been set up in two schools.

Learning materials in regional languages have been developed and are in use in 8 schools.

57 teachers participated in a workshop on how to increase joyful learning in the classroom.
Achievements

**Children’s Day:** 150 children participated in Children’s Day. A drawing competition, debate competition, song competition, and G.K. competition were held. The drawing and debate competitions focused on child protection issues in family, community, and school settings.

**Regional Language Workshop:** A workshop was held in March to discuss the impact of regional languages on education. Participants discussed teacher/student language barriers, learning materials in a language the children don’t understand, and increased dropout rates. The 80 participants included teachers, language researchers, the district project coordinator, and the district inspector of schools.

**Right to Education:** 51 people attended an awareness meeting on “Right to Education.” Village-level committees, panchayat raj institution members, teachers, CRCCs, and BRCCs discussed how to ensure 100% enrollment of children 6-14 years old, how to decrease irregularity of teachers, and how to create a pressure group in the community for better school infrastructure.

**WRIP Math:** As part of the writing reading improvement program (WRIP), a four-month pilot program teaching math skills was tested in 9 WRIP centers covering 197 children. Initial results found that 89 children have basic math knowledge (i.e. can read and write up to 50 and understand two-digit subtraction and addition).

Case Study

In the village of Ippavalsa in Sunki panchayat, 28 households reside. The 163 villagers include 27 children between the ages of 6 and 14 (11 boys and 16 girls). In 1978, a government primary school was established in the village. The school has 1 headmaster, 2 gana sikhyaka, and 1 sikhya sahayaka. Since the school was constructed, it has not been functioning properly—MDM was not served, no study or play materials were supplied, school uniforms were not provided, and government grants were not received. Parents’ involvement in domestic and agriculture activities and their lack of education does not give them time or knowledge to understand the importance of a functioning school. A VEC exists, but is unaware of the roles and responsibilities.

In a joint effort of a SOVA volunteer and the VDC, regular community meetings were organized. Awareness of government aid and grants and the roles and responsibility of the VEC in school activity was increased. After gaining the relevant knowledge, the VDC and VEC members called a meeting with the school inspector (SI). Twice, they reported the school’s dysfunction in writing, sending copies to the SI and the district project coordinator (DPC). In the end, the headmaster was replaced; the new headmaster is running the school on a regular basis and ensuring MDM. Villagers are contributing by keeping the school area clean. SOVA has supported playing materials and musical instruments, which is encouraging the children to attend school and persuading the parents to send their children. The VEC is now monitoring all activities of the school and all of the children are regularly attending.
Livelihood and Governance

90 people from 71 villages received low cost houses through the Shanti Kutira Program (SKP).

Grain banks have helped 478 families of 15 villages to reduce their dependency on private money lenders.

62 self-help groups were formed; 52 of have credit Linkages with financial Institution.

82 goats were given to a total of 30 families, to provide a dependable source of income.

197 SHG members of 18 SHGs received training and material support for management of Mashroom

Grain bank and seed Bank was established and 832 families benefited

15 families cultivated nursery saplings. They each earned profit of Rs. 1,200.

253 families produced 72 quintals of organic compost for personal use and selling.

17 acres of land were repaired in 6 villages. 21 families benefited.

After 2 FRA trainings, 600 members applied for land and forest rights.
**Achievements**

**Self-help Groups:** 61 SHGs are involved in income generation programs (IGP) such as vegetable cultivation and small business. For instance, three groups received a loan of one lakh rupees each to grow sugarcane. Rs. 45,000 to 55,000 profit was earned during the growing season. They invested the profits in further agriculture and in family maintenance. 62 new SHG groups have formed during the past year, usually requiring savings of Rs. 50 per month. These new groups have been given orientation on the concept of the SHG, as well as the role and responsibility in the village development process.

**NREGA:** A NREGA refresher training program was organized for new federation members. 30 members attended the program. Afterward, 7 members from 7 villages shared the information at the village level. 103 members applied for jobs of 15 days each and got them. The confidence levels of the leaders have noticeably increased since the training.

**Case Study**

Though Bati Marichpania is a widow in the poor Indian village of Bandhiaguda, she owns one acre of farmland. Up until a few years ago, the only way that she could benefit from this land was to hire bulls to work some of it. She worked tirelessly through the growing season to produce 4 quintals of paddy, which provided enough food and money for her family of three to survive for four months of the year. In May 2007, SOVA selected Bati as a beneficiary of two bullocks. After receiving training on livestock management, she began to use bulls to improve her livelihood in many different ways. She used the bulls to cultivate her entire plot, which allowed her to produce 8 quintals of paddy and provide food security for eight months. By allowing others to hire the bulls for Rs. 50 per day, she earned Rs. 3,000 over the course of one year. She used the extra money to provide health care and a funeral feast for her mother-in-law and to build a shelter for the bulls. This is the first time in her life that she’s able to plan for the future instead of merely surviving from day to day, an opportunity for which she thanks SOVA and Trocaire.

“The bulls have made me happy in many ways. I can produce more from my land. I feel secure for the future. I have confidence in my ability to provide for my family. And I now know that people outside of my village care about us.”
Blindness

19 school screenings tested the vision of 999 students.

SOVA worked with youth clubs, school teachers, and anganwadi workers to form children’s clubs in 20 villages.

Community awareness meetings were conducted in 292 villages.

During baseline data collection, 776 people were found to have various vision problems.

- In 2009, a team from SOVA surveyed 339 villages in Koraput and Semiliguda blocks to assess the need for eyecare services, disability awareness, and access to government schemes. A multi-faceted approach was implemented in the area.

- With the support of a paramedical worker, a free vision center in Semiliguda has been running two days per week since January 2010. Patients receive counseling on eye care and government benefits, and/or are referred to a nearby hospital.

- In 16 villages, eye-care committees were formed. SOVA staff trained the committee members on the roles and responsibilities for village-level eye care and the benefits available for treatment and rehabilitation through government schemes.

Case Study

Swagatika is a 4-year-old girl from Litiguda gram panchayat of Koraput district. She has been blind since birth. Her parents used what little money they had to visit multiple places for medical treatment, but nothing could be done to correct Swagatika’s vision. They were anxious to get her medical and social support. In 2009, the family was connected with SOVA. The SOVA staff helped the family to understand that Swagatika would be blind for her entire life, but that they could help her to live a normal, happy life. Now she is attending preschool and learning some independence in the home.
Community radio represents an important opportunity for development practitioners working in rural India. SOVA is working to create and manage a community radio station in Chappar village of Umuri gram panchayat of Koraput district. The station’s programming will cover more than 61 villages including Koraput NAC township in a 15 km radius by air.

- Communication needs assessment was completed. Information was collected from a sample of 579 people in 15 villages. The research showed a strong need for local information channels, as the available media fulfills neither the local needs nor the local aspirations of the people. Since the literacy rates in the area are very low, print media and newspaper circulation and readership is also very low. Despite the high penetration and use of both television and radio respondents, there are several barriers to accessing appropriate and relevant information, such as language. Most available content is in formal Oriya. Respondents indicated a desire for radio programming in regional tribal languages. They also are interested in content on relevant local issues like local livelihood, new and relevant agricultural practices, health issues, and local folk and film music.

- 12 community reporters, 3 field supervisors, and a project coordinator were recruited from the local villages where programming is targeted. Training was given on reporting and interviewing techniques, equipment operation, and programming effectiveness.

60 village volunteer trained on community Radio management.

Community reporters have worked to develop a cache of 10 to 15 minute programs.

Narrowcasting is underway in all 63 villages in the program area.
Achievements

- The distance from home to school is sometimes more than 5 km, too far to walk twice a day. This is especially true for girls, who are expected to contribute hours of their day to household chores. Attendance rates are abysmally low and dropout rates are high. In many cases, parents keep the children home until they are old enough to endure the long distances, but then the children are behind their peers in studies. To fight this problem, SOVA distributed bicycles to 23 sponsored girls from nearby villages. With the bicycles, the girls can more easily attend school on a regular basis. The bicycles also instill a sense of independence and confidence that is so important in the development of a young girl. The children and parents were given an orientation on how to properly use and maintain the bicycles, ensuring that many children will have access to basic education in the future.

- In March, 25 of the sponsored children were invited to the SOVA training hall for a 5-day residential workshop on “Comics for Development.” The facilitators taught drawing concepts such as lines and shapes, bodies and emotions. Then the children were taught how to use their new talent to communicate solutions to problems in their community by drawing four-panel wall comics.
24 Disaster Risk Reduction Committee have been formed in Koraput & Kundra Block of Koraput District. This committee has set up in high vulnerable areas and villages, where the incidences of disaster and occurrence are very more. The DRR plan has developed in 24 villages with the support of community. 5 DRR plan have been incorporated in Gramasabha.

SOVA is representing the DRR responses at the District and involved in the planning process. 5 Grain banks have been supported to the vulnerable families. As critical first steps, grassroots women and communities have led hazards mapping processes in their villages in order to identify key community vulnerabilities and capacities, thereby resulting in the definition of community priorities in DRR. Priorities fall under the following two categories: better preparedness, early warning and emergency response measures; and stronger community resilience practices, focusing on improvement of livelihoods and access to basic services, particularly health services and sanitation and drinking water facilities. This is coming under Core Principle of SOVA.

The emergency fund regularly maintained by women SHGs from 20 villages of Koraput block who save 5000 Rs. in the joint account as an emergency health and disaster fund during flood season and who maintain the fund at 500 Rs. for any health emergencies during non-flood season. Government linkage and resource mobilization by women of the project areas seems a way to build their institutional mechanism, who collaborate with the government to access government schemes, resources, and improve basic service delivery; Women self help groups members in the villages who are particularly vulnerable, especially in disaster situations are covering through this programme.
SOVA has a strong community base in the Koraput district and better linkages with the line department and with the community. The main focus on demonstrating the past year learning and best practices, SOVA has changed the strategy and developed new innovative activities in Koraput District.

SOVA will give more focus to work in collaboration with the District NRHM, for the promotion of the Institutional delivery under JSY scheme, and give more thrust on 100% birth registration and immunization in the project areas.

To increase the access to quality primary education SOVA will give more thrust on 100% enrollment, attendance and retention of the children in between 6-14 years and facilitate to mainstream the dropout children in primary schools, also SOVA will strive to integrate and mainstream the child protection and participation in all the programme sectors for this we will collaborate with DPEP, Koraput.

This year, we will continue our community outreach to have a diverse group of people involved directly or indirectly in SOVA activities. We have successfully established partnership with the Concern worldwide, Trocaire, Save the Children, CWS, Child Fund India, UNICEF, NEG-Fire, Sight savers International, Health & Family welfare Govt of Orissa, and other alliance and individuals like Annie.

As a non-profit organization, awareness is the most prevalent aspect that not only brings monetary contributions but also non-monetary support to the organization such as volunteer hours. We believe this can be achieved by working closely with local and international organizations. We at SOVA strongly believe that just lighting up the torch of humanitarian issues is not the only solution but passing that light to others is the key to galvanizing public awareness.

“Looking Forward for a Better Tomorrow”

SOVA, Koraput
**Abridged Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ended 31st March 2010**

**INCOME**  
2009-10  
2008-09  
Self Generated  
Membership Fees  
Donation  
Interest  
Others  
Total Self Generated  
Grant Foreign Source  
Programme Expenses  
Health, Sanitation & Nutrition  
Education & Literacy  
Livelihood  
Relief for Natural Calamities  
Policy, Research & Advocacy  
Total Programme Expenses  
Administrative Expenses  
Depreciation on Fixed Assets  
Loss on sale of Assets  
Total Administrative Expenses  
Excess of Income over Expenditure  
GRAND TOTAL  

**EXPENDITURE**  
2009-10  
2008-09  
Self Generated  
Programme Expenses  
Health, Sanitation & Nutrition  
Education & Literacy  
Livelihood  
Relief for Natural Calamities  
Policy, Research & Advocacy  
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Administrative Expenses  
Depreciation on Fixed Assets  
Loss on sale of Assets  
Total Administrative Expenses  
Excess of Income over Expenditure  
GRAND TOTAL  

**LIABILITIES**  
2010-11  
2008-09  
Capital Fund  
Term Loan  
Current Liabilities & Provision  
Loan & Advances  
Deposit  
Cash & Bank Balance  
GRAND TOTAL  

**ASSETS**  
2010-11  
2008-09  
Capital Fund  
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Loan & Advances  
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GRAND TOTAL  

**Financial Information**

**Breakdown of Spending 2009-10**

- Administration expenses: 24%
- Community Health: 20%
- Governance (Policy, Research & Advocacy): 16%
- Humanitarian Assistance (Emergency): 16%
- Livelihood: 15%
- Education and Child Rights: 12%

**Abridged Balance Sheet As on 31st March 2010**

**LIABILITIES**  
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2008-09  
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(Fig in Rs)
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<th>NAME</th>
<th>DESIGNATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td>Mr. Madan Kirisani</td>
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<td>Machra Village, Umuri GPKoraput, Orissa</td>
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<td>02.</td>
<td>Mr. Sanjit Patnayak</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Pujariput Koraput, Orissa</td>
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<td>Ms. Nabhi Ratna</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Berhampur Ganjam Dist, Orissa</td>
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<td>06.</td>
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<td>Ms. Suprava Nisanka</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Mr. M Mutyala Rao</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Ms Madhusmita Mohanty</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Pujariput, Koraput, Orissa</td>
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Special thanks to the partners who made our work possible:

ChildFund India
Concern worldwide
Debra Glasband
Goats & Hopes
Beyond Solar
National Rural Health Mission

New Education Group (NEG-fire)
Save the Children
Sightsavers
Trocaire, CWS,
Skillshare, UNICEF

Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO)

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