

Facilitating Empowerment Process



Parmarth  
Samaj Sevi Sansthan

A Profile

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## About Parmarth

Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan is non-governmental and non-profit organization, working for the weaker and deprived sections of the society. Its mission is to bring qualitative



### Goals

- Poor & socially excluded people and communities will exercise power to secure their rights & entitlements.
- Women and girls will be empowered to secure their rights & entitlements.
- State and their institutions will be accountable towards poor and excluded community.
- Livelihood promotion and food security of marginal sections of society over the year.

improvement and changes in the lives of the vulnerable & deprived sections of the society.

Since its inception in 1995, Parmarth continues working in the favour of poor, marginalized, vulnerable and deprived sections of society in the remote, ravine and dacoit-affected areas of Bundelkhand region. Its target community includes the poorest and most marginalized women, men,

girls, boys and socially excluded people.

Its work area falls in Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. At present, Parmarth encompasses more than 318 villages of district Jalaun, Lalitpur, Kanpur and Teekamgarh in Bundelkhand and hence providing the community a platform to lead their lives independently and with dignity, so that they are treated as equal human beings. Parmarth's social analysis reveals that feudal system, caste discrimination, gender discrimination, untouchability, illiteracy, poverty, migration, natural calamities, drought etc., are the major obstacles in the region.

#### Mission

Capacity building and empowerment of deprived and vulnerable communities through information, education and organization for their better access to rights & entitlements.

#### Vision

To contribute in building a society where all people can gain access to basic amenities such as education, health care, water, sanitation and livelihood opportunities and where all people can realize their full potential.

#### Outreach and Coverage

During its course of interventions, Parmarth has come across 23,993 households. Parmarth works in 318 villages by engaging 800 CBOs with approximately 80000 community members. Parmarth works in more than three districts of Uttar Pradesh and one district of Madhya Pradesh. Its major interventions are in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, which is both ravine-affected as well as dacoit-prone area.

### Approach

We emphasize on developing the inner strength of the community members, so that they can oppose the unfavorable conditions and demand for their rights and entitlements. We promote the process of people's empowerment in such a way that they come forward and form community based collectives / groups / institutions and exercise their rights and entitlements collectively.

Parmarth has facilitated and strengthened such community based organizations over a period of time. And now, at many places these organisations are carrying out the community's development agenda of their own. On regular basis, the organization provides them opportunity to improve their ability to learn and understand by ensuring their participation in several trainings, workshops, camps, exposure visits, conferences and any other means needed to improve their ability to learn and understand.

Parmarth always recognizes the local, traditional knowledge and promotes sustainable agricultural practices by involving small and marginal farmers.

Along with this, it also forms issue-based alliances with other civil society organizations, people's organizations and public representatives for promoting cooperative working. Most of the review and monitoring activities are handled by the community, which brings a touch of total transparency in our relations with them.

Intervention strategies  
"Enabling people to help themselves" is the philosophy of Parmarth

### Key Strategy

- Taking sides with poor and socially excluded people with focus on girls, women, person living with HIV / AIDS, physically challenged person, dalits & minorities etc.
- Rights-based Approach.
- Partnership, networking and alliance mode : Parmarth works in partnership, networking and alliances with poor, marginalized and socially excluded groups.



- Critical Engagement : Parmarth engages critically with community groups, governments and institutions. Its engagements may range from cooperation to confrontation but the ultimate task is always a non violent mode.

### Our strategic priorities and issues we are working with...

1. Women's and girl's rights - Violence against women and adverse sex ratio.
2. Right to Food, Work & Livelihood - Livelihood through the promotion and protection of livelihood resources. Parmarth also engages small and marginal farmers for ensuring their sustainable livelihood. It advocates for ensuring inter and intra households food security.
3. Mobilizing small and marginal farmers around sustainable agriculture practices and giving recognition to women as farmers.
4. Addressing drought and distress migration issues by mobilization of diversified stakeholders and seek their solidarity. The organization has facilitated the formation of *Apada Nivarak Manch* - a community based advocacy units working for drought mitigation in the entire Bundelkhand region.
5. Right to Education with focus on dalits and girl child by strengthening of government schools.
6. Water Rights-ensure easily accessibility and availability of water & sanitation services.
7. Liaisoning and linkages with of government - Activation of government machinery so as to confirm the access of community to it.
8. Right to life and dignity in the case of HIV & AIDS.
9. Abuse & violation of basic rights including deprivation of basic needs, water, shelter, education and health.
10. Strengthening of Governance - Strengthening panchayat institutions by organising time to time training programs on capacity building of people concerned and providing them better management skills on it.
11. Water management and introduction of natural resource management techniques in agricultural practices.

## Overall Impact/Achievements in the Past

Our recent Annual Reflection and Review Process (ARRP) exposed that Community Driven and Participatory approaches helped in generating encouragement level among community groups and other stakeholders of the civil society including government and political representatives. In the past, PARMARTH facilitated different range of programmes, which resulted into following achievements...

1. **The poor have been organized and benefited** - Community Based Organization formed, strengthened and functional in 206 villages. All these community based organizations have been further federated at district level as advocacy units called *Pahuch Vikas Manch* with total members of 7430
2. **Increased awareness and realization of entitlements** - Entitlements realized are mainly for social security schemes / government programmes targeted at the poor and meeting the basic needs, food rights, education rights, healthcare, pension, housing requirements, etc.
3. **Visible transformation in CBOs** - Transformation is evident with CBOs, particularly women's groups, adolescents groups, SHGs, interacting with panchayat representatives and government officials and functionaries and taking the initiative to attend and participate actively in Gram Sabha (GS)
4. **SHGs and federation movement has started to have a progressive impact in the lives of community groups** - 384 SHGs has been formed, strengthened and functional towards social, political & economical empowerment. 3 Women Based Federation has been formed in Madhougarh, Kuthound and Amrodha block and income generating activities has been started.
5. **Voicing of grievances over various issues** - People have now started to voice their grievances over issues such as BPL, voter identification, land encroachment, working of aganwadis,



GPs, government schemes, health centers, mid-day meals, Public Distribution System (PDS, for food grain), schools, etc.

6. **Taking initiative towards development-** Villagers are venturing out of the village to present, and seek solutions to, their concerns to political leaders, government and bank officials.



7. **Leadership promotion among weaker sections -** There are many instances of a local women and dalits leadership emerging with some CBO members contesting, and winning, PRI elections. Now, these leaders are discharging their responsibility in more transparent and accountable way towards poor and marginalized sections of the society.



8. **Garnering support from the administration -** Various Citizen Action and Pressure Building Exercise turn out to be effective in seeking solidarity and support from Local and District administration for poor and marginalized groups as per

prescribed norms and provisions on priority basis.

9. **Institutional Linkages -** Institutional Linkages have been established with local district administration. The membership and representation of Parmarth in committees and institutions at the District level is as follows:

- ❖ It is one among 11 members of District Vigilance Committee of Jalaun District of Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ It is also a member in governing body of District Rural Development Authority (DRDA), Jalaun.

- ❖ It also represents in district level committee of PNDDT.
- ❖ It is one of the members of Agriculture Technology Management Agency in Jalaun district.
- ❖ It is the member of district level Total Sanitation Campaign Committee. It is also representing in district level Public Distribution System for effective implementation of PDS schemes and formation of Grain Bank at village level with community participation.
- ❖ It is representing in Ground Water Recharging District Level Technical Coordination Committee in Jalaun district.

10. **Citizen Forum - Aapda Nivarak Manch** has been emerged and strongly advocating on drought, migration and water management issues at Bundelkhand Regional level.

11. Alliance and Network has been build up with media groups, government, the private sector and the civil society groups.

### Entitlement Specific Quantitative Achievements

- 5840 families of 36 villages started availing the facilities of Safe drinking water & sanitation.
- 8 villages have been made open defecation free villages.
- 4630 dalits (SCs) families benefited from community based natural resource management program.
- 410 poor farmers benefited from community based irrigation facilities implemented with the project support and now these farmers are cultivating wheat & other food crops first time in the last 50 years.
- Community Managed Grain Banks have been formed in 30 villages for dealing with inter and intra household food security during distress and difficult period or any kind of natural or man made disaster. It is also considered as community coping mechanism.
- 275 landless families got possession over their agricultural land as an outcome of land rights campaign.

- 2531- Hectare land has been treated through 6 mini water conservation programs.
- 35 primary school became functional after regular pressure from community groups and other civil society stakeholders.
- Effective linkages with media & administration and other civil society organizations have been developed at regional / state and national level.

#### Sustainability and exit plan in the project mode of work

Parmarth accepts the responsibility of enabling the existing CBOs to function on their own with arrangements necessary for financial and institutional sustainability. In this direction today "*Pahuch Vikas Manch*" a community based organization with total membership of 1920 women and 5060 male is moving progressively and building its own image and identity in the region.

Over 300 SHGs have been formed and have built up some savings track record. SHGs members have started discussing social issues and counteracting them. These all SHG have also federated called "*Mahila Ekta Sangh*". The members of SHGs have also started Income Generating Activities individually and collectively for their economical empowerment. These SHGs become significant in linking the local issues with global context. The best part of the SHGs movement is that it started contributing towards attainment of MDGs.

Parmarth anticipate that these CBOs '*Pahuch Vikas Manch*' & '*Mahila Ekta Manch*' will function in near future with the support of community groups.

#### Future Directions

- To consolidate our past learnings and achievements towards sustainability and exit plan of the project based intervention.
- To continue working on issues of Right to Food, Work & Livelihood with focus on ensuring effective implementation of NREGS and other Food Security and Livelihood Schemes. The organization will facilitate the Micro-planning exercise at

panchayat level and ensure its implementation with the support of government and the panchayat bodies.

- To continue our efforts in addressing the rights of poor & marginalized group. Our focus will be more on addressing women & girl's rights, land rights, education rights, health rights, water rights under the leadership of local community groups.



- To carry on our promotional work on issues of Small Scale Agriculture Sustainable Farming.
- To continue mobilizing efforts with women farmers and advocate for their recognition as farmers.
- To continue our strategic intervention on Drought and water management issues
- To take up the issue of Distress Migration and worked out local resource based livelihood opportunity at the regional level.
- To promote Micro Credit and livelihood programme towards gainful self and job employment through producers company and cooperative structure. This would be effective in increasing the bargaining power of farmers in present market scenario.

Parmarth will continue its works in partnership with Citizen Action Groups / CBOs, government, civil society organization, the private sector and others with focus on women / girls / dalits / Minorities / Person Living with Disability and Person living with HIV/AIDS.

- To link up our local issues with global context and works towards attainments of MDGs.
- To work towards promotion of Public Private Partnerships and initiate viable businesses with large scale coverage through our SHGs / Federation / CBOs etc
- To continue our participatory and

transparency exercises towards for ensuring the accountable and responsive governance structure such as Right to Information Campaign and Social Audit Exercise.

- To work for strengthening and sustainability of existing CBOs / Citizen Action Groups and other Institutions emerged during our past course of intervention, so that CBOs would take initiative to deal with local problems. Membership drive will increase and management aspect will be introduced at CBOs level.
- To continue to support the local, regional, state, national and international movement as Network / Alliance Partner

### Our Supporting Partners

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| ❖ Action Aid International, India      | ❖ NABARD, Lucknow |
| ❖ Oxfam India Trust                    | ❖ Water Aid India |
| ❖ DFID, PACS                           | ❖ UPSACS          |
| ❖ Vatsalya / Plan International, India | ❖ C.R.S.          |

### Networking & Allies

- ❖ Pahuch Vikas Manch-Community Based Groups with Membership Drive.
- ❖ Aakal Rahat Manch-Citizen Forum's advocating on drought & water issues.
- ❖ UPVAN, Lucknow-MDGs and PRIs Promotional Network.
- ❖ MARG, Delhi-Legal intervention with gender and dalit.
- ❖ AFPRO, Gwalior-Food Security and Natural Resource Management Network.
- ❖ Public Representatives Citizen Action Forum.
- ❖ Right to Food Campaign, India-Right to Food and Work Network.
- ❖ SADHAN Network-Micro Credit and Micro Finance network.



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