



STRIDES



Action Related to the Organisation of
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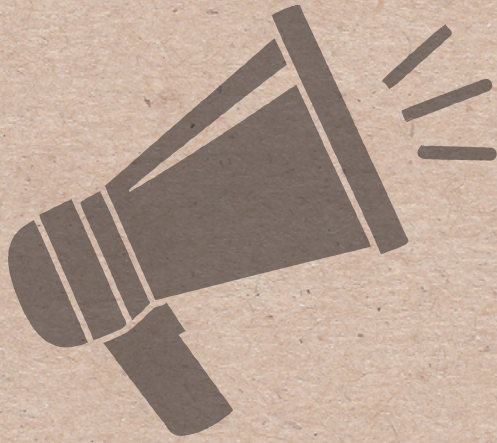
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A Public Dialogue on the Access to Livelihood in Mokhada

On August 8, 2024 AROEHAN spearheaded a public dialogue or Jan Samvaad on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The MGNREGA Scheme was started in 2005, in an attempt to provide livelihood security to the rural poor, by giving them at least 100 days of unskilled manual work, in a year. The scheme aimed to provide local employment opportunities to tackle the issue of urban-rural migration, improve the financial conditions and standard of living for people living in rural areas, strengthen the nation's Panchayati Raj system and empower women to be able to earn a living for their families. MGNREGA aims to engage unskilled manual workers to help them access livelihood opportunities and help them support their families.

The public dialogue or Jan Samvaad was conducted with labourers, government workers and public representatives in attendance. A public dialogue is a tool to foster dialogue between the general public and the government representatives, stakeholders and policymakers.



The issues highlighted in the dialogue included:

- ❑ The labourers were informed who can do what kind of work according to the availability of job shelf and based on equipment.
- ❑ The projects undertaken and completed in the last year were discussed while the reasons for incomplete projects were also addressed.
- ❑ The projects that are yet to be allotted are to be given first priority. The Gramsevak informed that form 3.2 can be filled now to undertake some road construction work in the forest areas.
- ❑ The maximum work was to be allotted under MGNREGA, to generate maximum profit and provide at least 100 days of work to the laborers, every year.
- ❑ The Rozgar Sevak reported that due to the absence of e-KYC, seven labourers did not receive five muster payments. These workers were requested to visit nearby post office to apply for KYC.
- ❑ Jobs such as planting trees on both sides of the road, rearing livestock, and planting trees on the wasteland were to be given to landless labourers in need of work.

Due to the remote location of Mokhada and Jawhar the 15-day job guarantee is not always vouched for as there is not enough job shelf. While in such cases unemployment allowances, as per the MGNREGA, should be availed, even that does not reach people. Sometimes, the work is very far from the vicinity and with the transportation issues and expenses, it makes it impossible for people to travel back and forth every day. Due to the recent digitalisation of attendance, it made it difficult for people in the remote area, with no network or devices to mark their presence. People have also complained about their unpaid or delayed wages and on some instances their attendance not being marked despite doing the work.



Foresters, Agricultural Assistants, Tehsil Office Representatives, Gramsevak, Rojak Sevak, Pada Samiti Members, officers from the Panchayat Samiti, among others were a part of this dialogue. The public dialog provided the people with an opportunity to discuss their issues and make their voices heard in presence of people responsible for their jobs and welfare.

INCLUSIVE LEARNING IN EVERY FIELD: FEMALE & MALE FARMERS VISIT KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRA



AROEHAN conducted study tours for farmers of Mokhada and Jawhar at The Agricultural Science Centre Kosbad Hill in Dahanu. Farmers from 6 Gram Panchayats of Mokhada Taluka - Kevnale, Gomghar, Washind, Adoshi, Shirasgaon, Dolhara, Dhamanshet, Koshimshet, Botoshi, and Pathardi were present in this excursion. A total of 26 female farmers and 58 male farmers collectively participated in both tours. The senior scientists at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) guided the farmers on the nuances of orchard and rice cultivation while highlighting its importance and explained farmers about modern organic fertilizer management. Along with various organic crop innovations, they also helped them understand mechanized rice cultivation and pest and disease control for crops like rice and millets.



Other experts helped the farmers understand things in depth by organizing field visits to SRT rice cultivation, mulching methods, paddy cultivation in agricultural beds by demonstrations of field. All farmers were also enlightened about modern productive means for livestock rearing. Often in government programmes, the livestock is distributed among landless farmers and vulnerable tribal families but appropriate caretaking for animals needs to be addressed for longer life of livestock and better revenue generation. Experts guided farmers to incorporate functional environment for both livestock and agriculture as they thrive in an open area. They could allow them to graze on field as they eat low growing plants, wild grass, algae, worms, etc. They were advices to put up water barriers and keep clean storage for their feed, With the advent of rapid technological advancements in the field of agriculture, it is imperative that farmers are continuously upskilled. These tours provide opportunities to improve their agricultural productivity, expand their knowledge, thereby improving their standard of living.

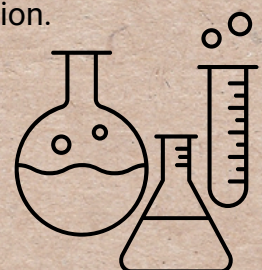


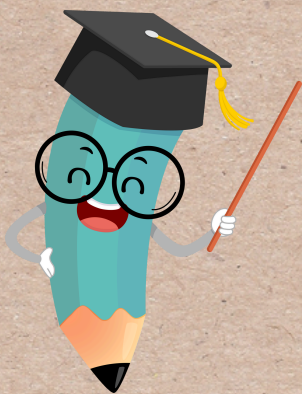


MOTIVATING YOUNG INNOVATORS THROUGH STEM EXHIBITION



Science exhibition provides age-appropriate possibilities for inquiry-based learning while also encouraging children to think critically and inquisitively. Through realistic simulations, it helps mentors and educators to communicate scientific theories and facts. Students can demonstrate their understanding of complex theories and know its practical applications. Among other benefits is also skills like project management since selecting and committing to a scientific project requires long-term planning, collaboration, and preparation.





The primary objectives of the science fairs

- Showcasing Knowledge: - Provide a platform for students to display their scientific understanding and innovative projects.
- Promoting Practical Learning: - Enhance students' grasp of physics, chemistry, biology, and technology through hands-on experience.
- Encouraging Teamwork: - Foster collaboration among students and encourage the application of theoretical concepts in real-world experiments.

During last annual year, AROEHAN established science clubs in Ashram Schools, who helped with facilitating these fairs. Students from 6th to 10th grade actively participated in these events. The science fair featured over 400 innovative projects with each participating school showcasing more than 20 exhibits. The projects were categorized into four main subjects: Physics & Technology, Chemistry, Biology, and Environmental Science.

Students demonstrated models for Satellite Communications, Air Exert Pressure, Drone, Air Conditioning (AC), Wind & Solar Energy, Oxygen Combustion, Hospital Innovations, Types of Motions on Earth & Solar System, Plant Cell and Animal Cell Models and also raised awareness on various topics like deforestation, pollution, acid rains, waste management, organic farming, water conservation, greenhouse effect, among other topics.

External Moderators were invited to evaluate the projects based on creativity, scientific concept, presentation, and overall impact. The fairs were attended by the school trustees, principals of higher secondary and primary, teachers, who showed their support and encouragement to the students. Teachers and Higher Management lauded efforts of AROEHAN to incite creativity among students to present complex understanding of physics, chemistry, biology, and technology. Based on the moderation, prizes were distributed among students with aim of motivating and inspiring young innovators.





RAISING MARKET VALUE OF MILLET PRODUCTS WITH WOMEN'S SHGS

Through micro agro-produce processing units and small entrepreneurial activities, we are trying to develop alternate livelihood options, especially for the landless farmers, women, and particularly vulnerable tribal groups. AROEHAN initiated a Shramik Adivasi Bachat Gat in 2022 which is furnished with the essential machinery and the Bachat Gat became a means of packaging, marketing and in some cases also for producing products for over Self Help Groups in our project area. Various products like rice, rice flour, nagli flour, chickoo chips, moringa powder, honey, papad, mango and pickles have been introduced to Women's Self Help Groups (SHGs) which has helped to generate decent income by providing variety into markets. To expand the avenues of SHGs AROEHAN conducts workshops for production, packaging, and marketing. On September 14, 2022, AROEHAN conducted a food processing workshop at Shelampada. A total of 62 women of 7 SHGs from different gram panchayats, Gomghar, Dongarwadi, Washind, Ambewadi, and Shelampada, were present.





The workshop was facilitated by food expert Ujwala Bhore and her team at Jawhar Farm. The present entrepreneurs were taught to prepare food products like papad, laddoo, chocolate made of Nachni. The participants made products like ladoos, papad, and chocolate after the facilitator demonstrated the process. Not only was the food nutritious but also delicious due to the special recipes provided by the trainer. They were also instructed about the product finishing and how to package them.

The participants were delighted to see that their household crop can be materialised into different products. Also known as Finger Millets or Ragi, Nachni is regarded as a highly nutritious crop that aid myriad of recurring ailments. The crop is abundantly grown in areas like Mokhada and Jawhar due to its topical advantage. While millets are known for its therapeutic properties, its market value had become miniscule, until last year, when India took upon the initiatives for International Year of Millets. The awareness of the nutritional value has caught a public eye and is a good time to introduce millets based food products in the market.



*It is estimated that Millets have been cultivated for over 7,000 years in India and is one of world's oldest cultivated crops. Little millet (*Panicum sumatrense*) is believed to have been domesticated around 5000 BCE in Indian subcontinent and Kodo millet (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*) around 3700 BCE.*



Unique Disability ID- Ensuring Access to Inclusion

Guest Author: Aarushi Gambhi

Pada Samitis have been constituted by AROEHAN to bring forth the issues of individual blocks and help villagers develop the confidence and skills to rally their issues in front of the Panchayat and other government officials. In a Pada Samiti meeting held in Kathewada, Baraga Bhai, who had a physical disability requested the mountaineering activist at AROEHAN, Mr Sudhir to help him apply for a disability certificate and sought information regarding the procedure for the same. AROEHAN's team took note of this and after some deliberation it was found that many disabled people did not have disability certificates. A list of 10 people with physical disabilities, between the ages of 13 to 40 years, from 6 different Padas, namely Kotbi Patilpada, Chari Ubhaduk Pada, Raitali Shetcha Pada, Ganjad Salkar Pada, Ranshet Varkhandpada and Pimplashet Sutarpada was identified. AROEHAN workers then reached out to the disabled welfare department on their toll-free number to understand the procedure and the availability of the doctors at the local hospital in Palghar to plan their visit accordingly. On 20th March all seven patients were accompanied by their parents and AROEHAN activists Dhanashree and Sudheer to the hospital.

Here they were explained the steps to issue the certificate and they submitted their application along with the other necessary documents to the concerned doctor. After 15 days, AROEHAN activists accompanied the parents to collect the certificates from the hospital, one person's certificate had not come through and was collected a few days later. Some people also applied for the UDID card and received it by post. The parents said that since AROEHAN activists had been involved with the process, it became easier and smoother. If they had to get the certificates issued themselves, middle men would be involved who would charge them extra under the pretext of making the process easy.

The UDID ID card can be issued online and offline. One should have their Adhaar card, scanned copy of signature, scanned copy of address and identity proof along with their disability certificate, if they already have one. For those who are unable to access the internet, the facility to apply for the card in a hospital is also in place.



The card has been put in place so that people with disabilities and their caregivers can avoid the hassle of carrying multiple documents everywhere and they are able to access all the facilities using this handy proof. NGOs such as AROEHAN act as the bridge to ensure that the benefits of the policies put in place by the government for the betterment of marginalized communities actually reach them and they are able to benefit from them to improve their lives.


In a welfare state, the government is responsible for the social, physical. Financial and medical well-being of people, especially those belonging to historically marginalized communities. The disabled community is one such group, whose medical and financial needs have been neglected consistently. Several legislations such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016 have been put in place to strengthen the community's access to healthcare, livelihood and education but the lack of proper implementation of the laws poses several challenges.


To combat the issue of the gap between policy to practice, the government came up with the concept of issuing disability certificates, to people with disabilities (40% and above). The certificate would help them access services and accommodations that are necessary for them to thrive in the society. Recently, the process of issuing Unique Disability ID cards (UDIDs) for people with disabilities has begun. One of the major benefits of a UDID card is that people who have a disability percentage of below 40% can also become beneficiaries and avail services meant for people with disabilities. UDID card holders are divided into three categories. A White Card is issued to people with below 40% disability percentage, a Yellow Card is issued to people with above 40% but on or below 80% disability percentage and a blue card is issued to people with Disability percentage above 80%. Both the disability certificate and the UDID card play a crucial role in helping people with disabilities access the services put in place by the government for them.





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