# Annual Report of MPSM for 2016-2017

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Maharashtra Prabodhan Seva Mandal (MPSM) moves beyond its 50 years with fresh approaches to rural development. MPSM’s people-centred programmes provide scope for participation and contribution. The programmes cover all sections of the rural communities. Sustainable Agriculture and Supportive Educational Initiatives are MPSM’s key strategies. Every effort is made to link with Government and other NGOs. Financial challenges, the high demand of professionalism, the constantly changing context are a stimulus to think and plan for today and the future. The action continues with new sightings and course adaptations. The poor must get the best of our efforts.

The following activities were undertaken during 2016-2017:

1. **Tree Planting Campaigns in the Monsoon**

Forest, Fruit and Fuel Tree Planting along with Kitchen Garden sowing was initiated in the monsoon months beginning June 2016. MPSM provided quality saplings of mango, chiku, coconut plants to farmers’ and women’s groups. Institutions in Raigad, Palghar, Thane, Nandurbar, Dhule, extending to Amravati District were guided by MPSM’s, field staff, using MPSM’s specially designed tree-planting pamphlets and supplies of seeds and saplings accessed through MPSM.

Besides fruit trees there was mass planting of general forest trees to recover deforested areas. Tree planting is one of the most effective campaigns to arrest environment degradation and deteriorating climatic conditions.

1. **Experiments in Organic Farming**

MPSM’s Field Staff have promoted Organic Farming focusing on the Mokhada-Harsul area: Experiments in Organic Seed Treatment; Organic Seedbeds without traditional burning of forest cuttings; Graftings on Local Mango Seed Saplings; Composting; Organic Slurries; 10-leaf Insect Control Spray; Enzyme preparations and applications; etc.. With MPSM Field Officer, Mr.Nagtilak’s guidance farmers grew more confident in organic practices. MPSM is now compiling digital presentations on Organic Farming methods and outputs which will be made available to collaborating centres.

Farmers’ clubs are being promoted to foster mutual support in tree planting, organic technology implementation, linking to government agencies.

1. **National Bank for Agricultural & Rural Development (NABARD) Project Completion Activities**

Fr.Joel, MPSM’s new Assistant Director since June 2016 kept close touch with the NABARD offices in Nashik and Pune. With assistance from Senior Project Staff Mr.P.Patil & Team NABARD’s Wadi Project was brought to a successful close.

Final reporting is underway. The NABARD Project has been a learning experience for MPSM Staff and serves as a model for MPSM to work further.

In areas where poor Tribal or Adivasi communities struggle to make a living farmers have increased their fruit growing trees, adopted organic farming practices, improved their earning capacity thanks to the MPSM-NABARD project.

1. **Tutorials for Adivasi Children**

MPSM’s determined effort to improve the quality of Tribal or Adivasi Education in 60 villages of Nashik District’s Peth, Surgana, Trimbakeshwar and Palghar Talukas entered its 7th year.

Village based Adivasi/Tribal Women are trained to hold tutorials in basic English, Marathi, Maths, for children of Std.I-IV in Govt. (Zilha Parishad) primary schools. More than 1000 children took part in the programme. The new classes particularly in the malnutrition-affected Mokhada area form a link between MPSM and the poor communities of that area.

This year a special learning kit was assembled for the children so that they would have basic revision texts and copy books suited to reading and writing of English, Marathi and Maths along with essential stationery.

**Computer Learning & Audio-Visual Education (CLAVE)** was systematically worked at with a team of 15 local Tribal or Adivasi youth visiting the 60 classes on motorcycle – sometimes on foot – to screen educational films and give children a hands’ on experience of the laptop once a week for each class. CLAVE was ably managed by Mr.Hemant Malghare, a self-taught Tribal youth, who also kept the internet systems ably functioning in MPSM for the College Hostel students.

1. **MPSM’s College Hostel Opens Employment**

MPSM’s College Hostel (180 students) saw 29 of them get jobs in various Government departments. The Hostel continues to offer simple, economical facilities to Adivasi youth from remote Talukas of Surgana, Peth, Dindori, Trimbakeshwar; from Talasari in Palghar District and Sakri in Nandurbar District. The ethos of the Hostel continues to be self discipline, self reliance. Serious personal study, attending their classes in various institutions, cooking their own food in groups, keeping premises tidy, helping with common activities, marks the life of the Hostelite.

1. **Extension Programmes for Education and Agriculture**

MPSM’s Education and Agriculture assistance continues in 9 Districts of Rural Maharashtra - Raigad, Thane, Palghar, Aurangabad, Ahmednagar, Amravati, Dhule, Nandurbar, Nashik. MPSM inputs include Teacher Trainings, supply of Teaching Aids – Charts, Films, Handbooks to enable self-learning and application of simple, innovative, sustainable technologies.

MPSM has been networking with Action for Agricultural Renewal in Maharashtra (AFARM, Pune), NABARD, Mumbai Jesuit Province and other NGOs working in solidarity for poor farmers and their environment resources.

1. **Media for Education and Agricultural Instruction**

MPSM researches, develops, produces and disseminates new audio visual learning materials for the challenging task of teaching English to Adivasi children in primary school. A new series of digital lessons is being worked at to help learning of sentences and other parts of speech.

An agricultural handbook was compiled from two previously designed handbooks on organic farming, soil and water conservation, care of farm animals. The new MPSM handbook for agriculture is a popular and easily referenced text for village instructions on essential agricultural themes.

The handbook is complemented by 3 documentaries on agriculture: soil and water resource conservation; organic farming; traditional animal husbandry.

1. **MPSM’s Ambatha Women's Centre (MAWC)**

With a special women’s team working in MPSM’s most remote (100 Kms from Nashik) subcentre in Village Ambatha, Surgana Taluka, 60 Adivasi or Tribal women’s groups were consolidated to promote minor credit unions, experiments with organic farming, tree planting, kitchen gardening, herbal nurseries, income generation activities. MAWC is based in the Prabodhan Vidyalaya and Vastigriha. A team of Sisters (Daughters of the Cross) organizes the services of MAWC.

MAWC runs a lively boarding with 160 Adivasi or Tribal girls in middle school. The centre is equipped with modern audio visual systems, laptops, solar power, gas cooking, etc. The Adivasi girls and the staff have developed their own prototype of a ‘’local self-government’’ system to manage the day to day affairs of their boarding.

The centre holds trainings for village teachers and for members of the village savings groups. Periodically Angan Wadi and ASHA activists are invited to programmes on health and sustainable agriculture.

The women’s centre has held trainings for personnel from social institutions in Karnataka, Gujerat; as well as the districts of Raigad, Palghar in Maharashtra.

International Women’s Day saw nearly 400 participants gather at the Ambatha women’s centre where MPSM teachers and agricultural staff held an instructive exhibition on organic farming methods, herbal remedies, skits on water conservation, malnutrition. Tribal dancing ended the celebration.

1. **Staff Accompaniment Strategies**

MPSM’s management has always worked closely with the field staff in the implementation of its wide range of educational and agricultural development programmes. Staff accompaniment has been the cornerstone of MPSM’s effectiveness in reaching out to the Adivasi or Tribal communities and partnering them in their efforts to develop.

MPSM Staff have had exposure visits to various projects demonstrating modern and sustainable farming practices in Baramati and Phaltan. The Assistant Director and Senior Staff attended workshops on climate change organized by NABARD.

1. **MPSM’s Training Centre, Organic Farming & Herbal Nursery**

MPSM’s Nashik campus although in the corner of a bustling City is an oasis of rural concerns. The Training Centre offers board, lodge and training facilities for NGOs, teachers, community building groups and other visitors interested in the works of MPSM. It hosts the permanent exhibition of MPSM learning materials for rural communities.

Some of the significant meetings that took place in MPSM’s training centre were the AFARM consultation on Agriculture in Adivasi Areas, the MPSM Staff and Teacher Trainings, the Annual Jesuit Districts’ Meet.

The **Organic Farm** continues to experiment with growing of vegetables and fruits free of toxic chemicals. A mini indigenous poultry unit has been started to promote the growth of indigenous poultry. Bee Keeping is being tried out.

**Medicinal herbs** are grown for promotion of herbal gardens by an Adivasi team headed by Mr.Devidas Chaudhary, versatile manager of MPSM’s Training Centre and Campus agricultural experiments...

1. **A Dairy Finds Its Feet**

MPSM has been fostering dairy development from a base in Dindori Taluka, Nashik District. More than 300 farmers are members of the dairy societies clustered as informal cooperatives in the villages. MPSM has placed a competent staffer Ms Sangeeta Argade to help the dairy societies with overall organization of the demand and supply of milk, fostering savings-credit-payback habits among the members.

MPSM organized a field visit to the dairy of Fr.Carlton Kenny in Mahad, District Raigad, to study the functioning of a compact dairy model.

1. **XISR comes to MPSM**

Xavier Institute of Social Research moved from the premises of St.Xavier’s College Mumbai to MPSM Nashik in order to better research rural issues from a Nashik base. Fr. Anthony Dias, SJ, PhD, the Director, has set up a library on social development and conducts professional studies on social issues from this centre.

1. **Future Developments**

 MPSM continues working on the Mumbai Jesuit Province's mandate to develop a quality resource centre for education at all levels of the rural community.

 In a recent meeting (April 21, 2017) for orientation of Staff, Dr.Lohia, the Chairperson of ‘Action For Agricultural Renewal in Maharashtra’ (AFARM) of which MPSM is a Member called upon NGOs to accept their unique responsibility to help the Nation keep its fundamental commitment to the development of its poor masses. ***MPSM is committed to the interests of the rural poor and continues finding new ways and means to sustain that commitment.***

We thank you for standing by our efforts.

Fr.Godfrey D’Lima, SJ

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