

A. News from SETU Africa

Ethiopia in India Exhibition for the first time at Dastkar Nature Bazaar (Basant 2015), New Delhi

Under the SETU Africa project, SEWA Bharat with Ruwab SEWA hosted Ethiopian Artisans and organized an exhibition at the celebrated Dastkar Nature Bazaar for their Basant 2015 festival. Organized from the 12th to 23rd of February, the 12-day exhibition run saw fantastic reception of handmade and handcrafted Ethiopian products by the Indian customers. SEWA Bharat welcomed artisans who brought along their designed and self-woven products and participated in the exhibition. WISE – the NGO partner from Ethiopia cooperated for the making of the event while DFID and International Trade Centre from Geneva supported the event.



Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony

The event featured as Basant 2015's special feature by Dastkar attracted Indian audiences in the two stalls put up by the artisans. The bestsellers in the stall were the 100% organic Ethiopian hand-spun and hand-woven stoles and leather bags. The quality of fabric and unique designs were appreciated by all. On the 21st and 22nd of February, The Cultural Centre from the Ethiopian Embassy also organized Ethiopian Food Stall that attracted lot of food lovers. The highlight of the Ethiopian stall was the setting up of Coffee Ceremony by the Ethiopian Artisans with the authentic Bunna Coffee. The aroma of the roasting of coffee and the unique taste was appreciated by all coffee connoisseurs at Dastkar.

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The reception at Dastkar was encouraging not only for Ethiopian products but also for SEWA Bharat promoted stall Loom Mool. It was not just a good platform for display of products for work of grassroots Ethiopian and Indian artisans but also a unique place for artisans to interact and build market linkages. The exposure was valuable for the artisans and the festival visit followed by interaction and visit for SEWA Bharat's producer company Ruaab and an opportunity for Ethiopian artisans to learn from each other.



Ethiopian Ambassador to India checking the products in the stall

SEWA Bharat will continue to strengthen ties with the African counterparts to mutually promote work of the grassroots artisans as well as gain fruitful insights on development practices.

Meeting with Tanzanian delegation in New Delhi

During our Tanzania visit in last November, the Tanzanian Social Security Association (TSSA) proposed a study tour of their officials to know in detail about the Social Security in India and experience of SEWA. In this regard, a high level ministerial delegation was on a 2 days tour of India. They visited Employee Provident Fund Organisation and interacted with Labour Department officials in New Delhi. The team was supposed to visit Ahmedabad on 24th February but due to paucity of time it was cancelled and they invited us to meet in New Delhi.



SEWA team with Tanzanian delegation in New Delhi

A five member team, including Mirai Chatterjee, Arman Oza, Ashaben Ajmeri, Rupaben and Shree Kant Kumar, met the delegation in Tanzania High Commission in New Delhi. The meeting started with a brief introduction of participants and then we presented about SEWA Social Security, VimoSEWA and SETU Africa programme. The Tanzanian delegation includes-

1. Hon. Gaudensia Kabaka (MP) - Minister of Labour and Employment
2. Hon. Hawa Ghasia (MP) - Minister of Regional Administration and Local Government

3. Hon. Celina Kombani - Minister, Presidents Office Public Service Management
4. Hon. Haroun Suleiman - Minister of State, Ministry of Labour, Zanzibar
5. Hon. Kebwe S. Kebwe - Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
6. Dr. Ramadhani Dau - Director General Nation Social Security Fund - Tanzania
7. Mr. Crescentius Magori - Director of Operation, National Social Security Fund - Tanzania
8. Mr. Eugen Mikongoti - Director of Operation National Health Insurance - Tanzania
9. Ms. Eunice Chiume Chief Manager National Social Security Fund - Tanzania
10. Mr. Meshach Bandawe - Secretary General - TSSA

Ms. Gaudensia Kabaka (MP), Minister of Labour and Employment, appreciated our effort in Africa and promised to extend her full support in Tanzania. She endorsed the idea of providing access and market-linkage support to poor women for their produce. She appreciated the idea of setting a trading linkage between women of two countries. She assured that her office will extend the full support to our partner organization in Tanzania. Mr. Haroun Suleiman, Minister of State, Ministry of Labour, Zanzibar, shared that his ministry tried to start a bank for poor self-employed women in Zanzibar and would like to know more about the SEWA Bank experience. The SETU Africa team will share a brief note about SEWA Bank with him. Mr. Crescentius Magori, Director of Operation, National Social Security Fund, showed his keen interest to know more about the development of different insurance product for poor and marketing of it.

It is proposed that VimoSEWA will coordinate and arrange an exposure visit of senior level delegation of Tanzania Social Security Fund. The SEWA team invited a team from Tanzania Embassy in New Delhi to visit SEWA in Ahmedabad, to know more about the work SEWA is doing with informal sector worker.

B. News from SEWA

Tripartite Workshop: Occupational Health and Safety in the construction sector

SEWA has had a longstanding tradition of working with female construction workers who are our members, to improve their health and safety in working sites. The high record of fatalities and other accidents at work sites that could be prevented has led to many initiatives. The tripartite workshop organised on 4th December, 2014 was one among them, to focus on the occupational health and safety in the construction sector bringing together the construction workers, their employers and the government labour department.



The objective of this workshop was to draw upon the knowledge and experience of the participants, around 20 who came from diverse backgrounds including the workers board, trade unions, employer associations, government labour department, research institutes and the private sector. Dr. Anil Patel, Chairman, Construction Workers Welfare Board, Gujarat was the guest of honour.

It provided the participants with a platform to give their opinion on what the most urgent problems on construction sites in Gujarat are. Many suggestions for future collaborations to better the environment at the construction sites and possible interventions to address some of the emerging issues were discussed. The foremost solution that was echoed by all present was to formalize the construction sector by registration of the construction workers and the small contractors. According to them, registration will enhance the smooth implementation of the benefits meant for the workers.

It was also suggested to have portable cards for the workers, which will not only act as an identity card or registration card, but also as a health card so that the workers can benefit from the available government health schemes. This kind of centralization would ensure that duplication is checked. A need was also felt for a partnership between the government, the construction companies and the workers to spread awareness for the safety of the workers and the use of the available resources for awareness programmes and educational sessions for them.

The recommendations suggested by the participants was presented to the Chairman of the Workers Board and the inputs of the workshop will enable SEWA to strengthen our programmes designed for construction workers to improve their health and safety in work sites.

ShramikMahotsav (Labour Festival) and Youth Festival celebrations at SEWA Bharat

Like every year, SEWA Bharat concluded the 2014's successful run up of activities by celebrating ShramikMahotsav (Labour Festival) and Youth Festival in Delhi. The festival is celebrated to honour the lives and achievements of the remarkable women and girls of SEWA who have faced and overcome tremendous barriers in their everyday life. The celebrations this year were held on the 23rd of December, Thursday at the well-known Shah Auditorium in New Delhi.



SEWA Delhi Polytechnic Students performing folk dance

The day was marked by gathering of SEWA members, grassroots leaders, field staff, management staff and students of SEWA Delhi Polytechnic and Youth club members who participated in various activities to showcase the spirit of SEWA. Members performed short skits to showcase the plight of SEWA sisters from the trades of domestic help, construction work and vendors and how SEWA's efforts have been helping them. These skits were successful to highlight SEWA's community action and advocacy work.

SEWA's youth brigade participated with several other local NGOs in dance competition, creative writing and painting competition and won accolades and awards. The highlight of the performances was the fashion show to display costumes designed and stitched by talented students of SEWA Delhi Polytechnic.



SEWA Aagewan and Domestic Worker, Deepali Ben felicitating Elaben at the ShramikMahotsav

We were graced on this occasion by the presence of Smt. Ela Ben Bhatt, an activist, Gandhian and founder of SEWA the SEWA family. Elaben pioneered the women's empowerment movement for grassroots development and is recipient of one of India's highest award, the Padma Bhushan and the internationally recognized Ramon Magsaysay Award (1977). Elaben enjoyed the performances and applauded the SEWA sisters for putting up a heartwarming show. She reiterated the spirit of SEWA in her speech, inculcating in everyone the sense of union. To inspire our young

brigade, we were also graced by the presence of Ms. Malvikalyer - A youth icon, who faced immense odds after losing both her hands and severely damaging her legs in an unfortunate accident post a bomb blast. Malvika turned her life around and is today a dedicated social worker, a motivational speaker and model for accessible clothing in India.

SEWA hopes to continue this tradition at a bigger and better scale and has delved into 2015 with plans to expand and evolve programs for the development of its member.



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