

# Status Report- West Champaran

## Objectives:

- 1) To explore SSK's accommodation, ground activities, and service delivery system;
- 2) To gauge SSK's human resource productivity;

In this report, I will discuss my understanding of the Soochna Seva Project, West Champaran which will consist of a brief introduction of the Centres followed by its descriptive status report. The latter will touch on areas related to the centre operation, lines of services, service delivery system, student profile, human resource, revenue and so on.

After spending a week in Bettiah, I had the opportunity to observe how the Soochna Seva Kendra's carry out digital literacy program and deliver digital services in the populous blocks of West Champaran, Bihar. I'll comment on below mentioned centers that I've covered during my visit.

- Balthar Centre, Sikta block
- Bhagai Village Centre, Lorea Block
- Vijaypur Village, City Panchayat, Gaunaha Block
- Bhitiharwa, Oracle centre
- CIRC, Oracle, Pirari
- Daun, tribal area- non-functional area

Basically, the centres were formal in structure, that is, they have clear and formal hierarchical office authority. Each staff performs specific functions. This clear job specification of staff helps the centre to operate in an orderly manner. I have found work force in almost all the centres very confident and easy to communicate. Most centres were neat, tidy and organised. Space is limited in the centres but it can be expanded if we get higher student enrollments.

For the outdoor duty engagements, the centre coordinator and digital fellow are assigned all the field tasks. In most centres, centre coordinator and digital fellow as a team visit beneficiary homes, panchayats, BDO and other important places for information dissemination.

I quite appreciate the working morale and attitude of our field workers; however, upon talking to most colleagues, I realized that they all gave parrot-like responses about their daily work routine. Everyone had same stuff. Although centres are maintaining activity movement records but I'll suggest that we start a culture of advance weekly plan to monitor field activities. Almost everyone I interviewed in the centres had no planning for the next day activities. The weekly plans will ensure that we as a team are staying on track with our long-term goals.

I will also request management to invest in our human resource development. On the last day of our trip, we had a team meeting with our entire ground staff. I did a basic Microsoft office workshop with them. Some were better than me and some just not good enough. The training will not only help staff to grow professionally but it will enhance our centre productivity (in terms of revenue) as well. I'll suggest Microsoft office, Photoshop, PageMaker training workshop.

### **Vahid observations:**

It has been observed that the centers are more structured and the performance of the team has significantly been increasing. Team has a vision to expand the Socochna Seva services in neighboring panchayats and blocks. The most important and substantial thing is that team has formally signed a letter with Panchayat representatives, in order to start the SSK activities in Panchayat Bhawans. In addition, more panchayat representatives are offering the space in Panchayat Bhawan to start the services for their panchayat beneficiaries. Other stakeholders and government administration have started to recognize the work of Soochna Seva at the ground. In other word, the report with government administration and stakeholders has been building up and this is a positive sign of impact to the project.

SSK teams also hoping that introduction of Soochnapreneurs will strong the shoulders of SSK team in every block and add valued to reach out the project objectives and DEF vision in West Champaran. Every SSK will have 4 Soochnapreneurs and these shall be associated with the block SSK.

### **Balthar SSK - Sikta Block**

Centre Coordinator- Amlesh Sharma

Education Qualification- Law Graduate

Role- Field Work (information dissemination) and Report writing

Digital Literacy- Mamta Kumari

Education Qualification- ex-Digital Literacy student

Soochna Seva Fellow- Tanzer Alam

Role- Liaising with govt. officials and outreach of panchayats Kathia Mathia and Surcha Bhivanipur

- Balthar centre is catering to the 5 panchayats in Sikta block.
- Currently, 11 students are studying at centre under digital literacy program.
- Community members are demanding an independent Sookna Seva Kendra to be set up in Panchayat office.
- Centre is planning and request for assistance to start written and spoken English classes.
- Largely, School going boys are enrolled for centre classes.
- Interactive efforts required by the centre to encourage women and girls to enroll in the digital literacy program.
- Information Camps, community meetings, and door-to-door activities are enabling the centre to reach to wider audience.
- Photocopy (Rs 2 per copy) services available at the centre.
- No internet connectivity at the Centre.
- Centre workers requested for colour printer, computer systems, and anti-virus.
- Centre August and September revenue are Rs 3418 and Rs 2639 respectively.

### **Vahid Observations & thoughts:**

This SSK has started working to improve infrastructural development of community institutions i.e. Anganwadi Kendra, primary schools, primary health centers, front line health workers, panchayats, banks etc. These activities have been started in order to provide the services at mass level. If school starts functional well so all children studying in will be benefited automatically.

Besides having less staff, SSK has been performing well and a visionary practice is being adopted by the team to work further. Beneficiaries have been visiting the SSK and getting benefits of the schemes, rights and services.

This SSK has started Panchayat Sookna Seva Kendra in 5 different Panchayats and have been providing the services to the beneficiaries. These panchayat SSK are being managed by Block Coordinator and fellows.

Digital literacy and services part is week and team has been instructed to improve this in near future.

### **Bhagai village SSK- Loriya block**

Space- Well maintained and organised 2 room set centre.

Digital literacy- Ms Jyoti Kumar

Education qualification- BA part 1, X-SSK student

Role- Digital literacy

Soochna Seva Fellow/Coordinator- Prakash

Role- Scheme/entitlements information dissemination + Schemes endorsement through Panchayat heads + Field work.

Digital Services- Vineet

Role- Field work + Call centre operator

Soochna Seva Fellow- Rajeev

Role- Key person for information dissemination activities (DS/DL) + Report writing + Beneficiary identification

Motivational speaker- Arvind

Role- Crowd mobilization + Networking + Monitoring camp activities

He is creating a brand value of SSK among youth, farmers, women group, and daily wage labour community. He assists Soochna team in identifying potential beneficiaries while camp activities or community meetings.

Centre student strength- 25

Total 5 batches running and each batch takes 1-hour class (theory + practical).

Properties in Centre

Laptop- 4

Desktop- 1

Table- 6

Chair- 2

Stool- 10

Whiteboard, Duster, Marker, Printer, Inverter, Pen drive, Camera and Notice Board- 1 each

Tablet and Photo printer is damaged.

Lorea block has 21 panchayats and centre, currently, caters to the digital needs of 5 panchayats. The panchayats covered by the centre are Bagahi Baswariya, Dewarna, Telpur, Lakkad Sishahi and Dobhani. Total 26 villages with 20k population compose of these 5 panchayats.

Centre has limited internet connectivity.

Centre maintains separate files for attendance, activity movement and visitor log book.

Centre September month revenue was Rs 2400

Centre has no women/girl enrolled student.

Note- In the team meeting, following guidelines was recommended to SSK centre team.

- a. To escalate the issue of setting up Panchayat SSK with the concerned authorities.
- b. To intensify the efforts in disseminating schemes information for livelihood and employment among community members.

### **Vahid Observations & thoughts:**

The best part of this center is strength of the team their liaising with government administration. Team manages the SSK activities minutely and always work for the betterment. They are expanding the SSK services in more panchayats and villages. This SSK has one extra resource as Call Centre Operator who is actually handling the entire activities of the Kendra. He also trains to the team regularly and also monitors the field level events.

Digital literacy is slightly better because instructor is quite intellectual and enthusiastic towards her and duties. She first completed the course from this center then she joined DEF as computer trainer six months ago. People also come to avail digital services.

The assignment has been given to them is

- They need to work on every category and will report to head office in next 2 months.
- Team will identify 4 SoochnaPreneurs in next 2 weeks and engage them in SSK activities
- Team will collect more schemes from the block & district administration
- Need to increase digital literacy students in class
- Team will formally sign a letter to seek permission in order to start Panchayat Soochna Seva Kendra.
- Team will plan and hold focus group discussions with the beneficiaries and stakeholders
- Team need to work for infrastructural development and community development
- Team need to finish the online work of MIS
- Team need to learn computer to next level.

## **Vijaypur city centre- Gaunaha Block**

### **Launch of Yojana Banks in West Champaran**

15th October, Yojna Bank Inauguration

Chief Guest- Shailendra Kumar Garhwal, Zila Parishad, Chairman, West Champaran

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Information as a weapon has a potential to transform lives. With this belief, Soochna Seva Kendra (Information Service Centers) is running digital inclusion activities in West Champaran, Bihar since 2014. The Soochna Seva team key objective is development via information dissemination and digital literacy.

The level of overall awareness in India is much better than ever before. People are accessing information about government schemes and initiatives through various digital and non-digital mediums. The schemes details are readily available in government sponsored booklets and online interfaces.

However, areas chosen under Soochna Seva project are extremely backward in terms of Health, Education, Social Security, Livelihood and Financial standards. The citizens residing in most parts of West Champaran are still untouched by any government aid and support. The existing healthcare and education infrastructure is in a grim state. The government officials laid back attitude and their nexus with anti-social elements having vested interest is amplifying corruption in such areas. As a result, many are still living in darkness deprived of their human rights.

To eradicate the rampant corruption culture and to bridge the information gap in rural India, SSK has opened up a Soochna Seva Bank. The bank will provide information and digital services to the last mile beneficiaries. The Yojana Bank launch event was attended by prominent members of the different panchayats, village, government offices and even some beneficiaries of Soochna Seva project. Towards the end of the program, a promise of becoming self-reliant and taking the onus of spreading the information knowledge in nearby villages was made by all the participants.

**Event report-** Rameshwarji in his introductory remarks highlighted the importance of SSK in Gaunaha. He reinforced the power of education among community members and recommended everyone to effectively use SSK as a learning resource. The block development committee member, Jai Bhadur, and other guest panelists, also encouraged community members to start fresh and become digitally literate.

The chief guest, Shailendra Garhwal, said, it's time for everyone to rise up and use education as a tool to hedge against ignorant life.

Centre Coordinator- Prabhu

Role- Digital literacy/ Field work

Educational Qualification- Inter

Digital Literacy- Ms Mansa

Role- Teaching Computer to students in Vijaypur centre and Kasturba College (Oracle centre)

Educational Qualification- BA, result awaited

Soochna Fellow- Sukhdev

Role- Field work

Educational Qualification- BA

Centre is centrally located and providing digital literacy/services in Mohui, Matiaria, Sithi, Rupwalia and Gaunah. By tapping above mentioned Panchayats, the centre is reaching out to more than 40k community members residing in these areas.

As sukhddev and mansa are handling Oracle centre (Kasturba College), prabhu is left alone at the centre. In first half prabhu runs computer classes and in the second half he goes for field work. So centre remains closed while he is in the field. I'll suggest that we quickly hire a resource person to have the centre open for the full day.

Centre, currently, has 20 students enrolled for the computer course.

Centre revenue in September 2016 was Rs 2500

Centre Properties

Laptop- 4

Desktop- 2

Battery- 2, 150 mpr each

Whiteboard- 1

Stool- 10

Chair- 2

Table- 5

Almira- 1

Photo printer- 1

Centre maintains attendance, revenue/expense, visitor log book, Stock, movement and meeting files.

**Kasturba Kanya Senior Secondary School, Oracle Centre, Bhitiharwa**

Digital Literacy/Fellow- Ms Mansa  
Role- Computer trainer

Soochna Fellow- Sukhdev  
Role- Information dissemination

The Kasturba school secretary, Mr. Dinesh Prasad Yadav, is requesting DEF to set up 10 desktops in the computer lab. The school is willing to make the payment against the deployment in instalments. The deal sounds good to me. The school's rent-free space is excellent to run Oracle, CIRC and SSK operations. In addition, the school admin has agreed to give full access to the computer lab to community children after school hours.

We must quickly submit a price quotation to school for 10 computers. We must inform the school that computers will legally remain our property until full payment is made to DEF.

The Kasturba School has 120 students strength. The school runs on local community contribution and charges no tuition fee from students. The school teaches students from 6th standard to 12th standard. The total staff in school comprises of 22 members including 11 non-teaching staff.

The school 3-acre land is owned by Bihar government.

The 2 km area in school radius is SC/ST populous area. The 5 villages near school have 40k population.

Centre properties

Laptop- None. Mansa every day carries a laptop to school from Vijaypur centre

Printer- 1

### **Vahid Observations & thoughts**

The Oracle supported CIRC has been functional in Kasturba Gandhi School close to Gandhi Ashram. The selection of this CIRC center has smartly been done because school has 138 girl children studying in middle classes. The school has been owned and managed by the local community people. They donated their lands to school in 1986 because Kasturba Gandhi taught to the girls here in Gandhi Ashram.

This center has given a target to teach 500 students till March 2017 and they already have taught 147 students. So team has assured to complete the target within the time limit. Center has not started access to information services of public scheme but they will start this soon.

School Principal has requested made a request to DEF to provide 10 systems and school will return the amount back in installments. It has been replied that this will be discussed in DEF headquarter.

## Oracle Centre- CIRC, Pirari

The centre is one room set up. It is small, unorganised and located next to a gutter.

Coordinator- Akshay Kumar (Manatan centre)

Education Qualification- PG in Political Science

Role- SSK Field work

Soochna Seva Fellow- Satya Prakash Ram

Education Qualification- Inter pass

Role- Information dissemination

Centre's Student strength is 16

Centre property

Laptop-2

Table- 5

Chair- 2

Stool- 10

Centre has no internet connectivity.

Centre September month revenue was Rs 1400

Centre maintains attendance, movement and visitor log book in separate files.

Akshay and Satya commute daily from Manatand centre to Pirari centre and back. I think its bad management of human resource. I suggest fresh hiring for Pirari centre.

## **Vahid overall thoughts & observations:**

All Kendra are performing slightly better in delivering services related to access to information, digital literacy and digital services. All SSKs are expanding their reach to nearby panchayats, villages and blocks. They are signing formal letter with panchayat representative to seek permission in order to use panchayat space for providing access to information and delivery services. Team require several tasks to complete, these are as follows;

- Every SSK need to equally work on all categories instead of focusing on Social Security, Financial Inclusion and Education.
- SSK teams are required to convert the registration into benefits to the beneficiaries.
- Ramnagar and Lauriya SSK should tie-up with Panchayats in order to open Panchayat Soochna Seva Kendra
- Every SSK should have properly displayed and visible board of Yojana Bank
- Training of the fellows is strongly required and they should be trained on several issues i.e digital literacy, outreach, liaising, advocacy etc.
- Team need to change the strategy and accept to work on infrastructural development and community development so that beneficiaries at masses can be benefited.
- Team need to collect the information of more schemes in order to incorporate in Soochna Seva app.
- All SSK need to regularly maintain online database with photographs of the beneficiaries.
- Attendance in digital literacy classes need to be increased in every SSK
- Every SSK will keep in touch with SoochnaPreneurs and learned them all activities.
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