

Sewa Sandesh May 2018

Sewa Bru Rehab Project – A Tribal Support Initiative



Bru Tribes (also called as Reang), are among the 21 scheduled tribes of the state of Tripura. In 1997, a bout of ethnic violence forced thousands of Brus to leave their homes in Mizoram, & ever since, they took refuge in a town called Kanchanpur in northern Tripura. Now, they are

spread across 7 refugee camps on the Jampui hills. Sewa International's rehabilitation initiatives for the Bru tribe have focussed towards providing employment/livelihood opportunities through skilling, education and health services to this community and surrounding areas.

Education Sewa International has made much effort to make learning and educational equipment available to tribal children. Sewa International distributed the following learning aids and sports equipment in 22 Sewa Learning Centres(tuition centres) across displaced camps in **NaisinghPara, AshaPara** in Kanchanpur sub-division and **Khakchangpara, Kaskaupara** in Panisagar sub-division -

- All-in-one book (elementary)
- Maps (India/World)
- 7 types of charts (alphabet, fruits, colors, numbers, body parts etc.)
- Badminton kit
- Skipping ropes
- Board games

Not only was this a new experience for the children, because of the addition of the sports equipment, a dedicated 'games/recreation period ' has been included in their centre timetable for the very first time. Sewa aims to support tribal

schools and tuition centres/recreation period not only was this a new experience for the children, because of the addition of the sports equipment, a dedicated 'gcentres with the necessary learning aids and sports equipment as our aim is to contribute to the overall well-being and holistic development of the tribal children.

These continued efforts are especially important because when these learning centers were initiated, only a handful of children attended due to various reasons. But once people learned about the free of cost & quality of the educational services being provided at these centers, the number of children gradually increased and continues to do so, till date.

In order to keep the attendance going strong and to reduce the dropout rate, Sewa International held an Educational Awareness Programme in the Naisingpara camp. Bru children turned up in large numbers to participate in the camp and were made aware of different learning techniques to help them develop an interest in various subjects, and a special orientational address was also made to make children aware of the importance of attaining a formal education and the implications of illiteracy in the outside world.

Kaushal Bru – Sewa & PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna)

Sewa International trainees in the PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna) training center at the KhakchangPara camp, Tripura, have acquired the skill of tailoring through their diligence, hard work and our support, thus



opening new venues for livelihood for the Bru tribe. The trainees here are now wearing dresses that they have stitched themselves through their newly acquired tailoring skill and are making dresses for the community as well that will further provide precision to their work.

Health & Hygiene – Sewa Swasthya Mitra



As part of a Health and Hygiene initiative, Sewa International conducted a Review of Health Awareness Training for our informal health workers called Sewa Swasthya Mitra led by Dr. Viren Naik, who volunteered for this cause. The training focussed on evaluating the progress of the Swasthya Mitra,

identifying gaps and opportunities for providing better health care. This program focusses on spreading awareness among tribal people of the hazards of leading an unhealthy, unhygienic lifestyle and promotes hygiene best practices among the community, along with offering free of cost common medicines for general ailments like fever, diarrhea etc. These informal health workers (Sewa Swasthya Mitra) bridge the gap between public healthcare institutes and underprivileged patients, who, due to lack of knowledge and accessibility to healthcare services, suffer to the extent of losing lives due to common ailments.

The Sewa Swasthya Mitra team visited the Hazacherra camp and the families residing there. The team interacted with the families, especially the womenfolk and children, making them aware of the benefits of a daily hygiene routine and healthy practices to help prevent diseases and lead a healthy lifestyle in general.

3 Medical Camps were also held in Hazacherra, Ashapara and Khakchangparacamps. 400+ bru tribals in camps were benefited through these camps. For the follow-up, they were referred to nearby hospitals as well as Swasthya Mitras were instructed to visit them regularly to see their improvement.



Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra ~ Uttarakhand



Sewa International's interventional efforts in Uttarakhand have been gaining success and acceptance among the local communities, ever since they were initiated in 2013, post the disastrous cloudburst, which killed and many and rendered families homeless. But due to our rehabilitation undertakings, the local population of Uttarakhand has been able to usher out of the engulfing aftermath of the natural calamity in the region. Recently, **52 of our young trainees** successfully completed their skill development training in Quality Seed Grower and Self-Employed Tailor job roles, under **PMKK (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra) program of NSDC**. A certificate distribution event was organized in Chandrapuri, which was presided over by Hon. **MLA(Rudraprayag), Shri Bharat Singh Chaudhary, to encourage the successful trainees**. Mr. Chaudhary lauded the efforts of Sewa International in creating employment avenues in the remote and far-flung hilly regions of Uttarakhand thus preventing dissatisfaction, distress, and employment-related migration among the youth of the state.

Sewa Kaushal Vikas Kendra ~ Uttarakhand

Sewa Krishi

Under Sewa Krishi, the women from Dakshin Kali SHG have begun engaging in community cluster farming in village Raduwa, Pokhari Mandal. Through this initiative, Sewa International intends to curb the losses incurred due to fragmented land holdings in a systematic way, and



maximize their bargaining capacity at the time of production.

Sewa Mahila Jyoti



Sewa Mahila Jyoti vertical has been mainly providing 2 types of training which are:

- Center-based training
- Community-based training

Through centre based training, around 380

women have already completed their training from 6 different centers run by Sewa Mahila Jyoti.

We have successfully organized community-based training in 9 villages of Chamoli and Rudraprayag districts in the state of Uttarakhand. In these training centres, a total of 131 women were collectively skilled so far.

Currently, in 6 such community-based training centers, training sessions are in progress, benefitting around 31 women.

Recently, Sewa Uttarakhand began a 20 days community knitting camp in village Chandnikhal, Pokhari cluster on May 21st, 2018, in which 21 women have registered.

Apart from training in the skill of knitting, Sewa Mahila Jyoti has also trained 22 female beneficiaries of Subhai village, Tapovan, district Chamoli, for the production of Ringal (Bamboo) based products.

These training initiatives/programs will enhance the employability of these rural women and help us step closer towards our aim of a skilled Uttarakhand.

Sewa Kashi



“Swacch-Shikshit-Kushal



Kashi" was started with the aim of reviving the dying handloom industry of Banaras or 'Kashi', and has evolved with multi-pronged holistic interventions in the fields of education, health, sanitation & agriculture. The weaver community in Kashi

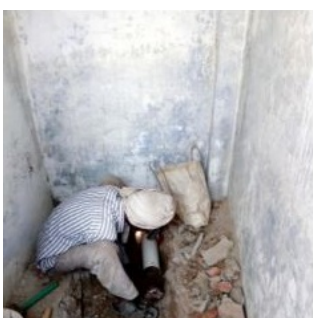
has been trained with latest developments in their field through the workshops conducted by Sewa International from time to time, their products branded and sold in exhibitions, their kids educated, and their locality made Open Defecation Free (ODF) through sponsored individual/community toilets. Farmers are given periodic training to improve their agricultural skills.

Their children are provided educational aids in various educational centers managed by Sewa International. The change is visible and positive. In order to help in the identification of the beneficiaries of our Chunar initiative, Sewa International has helped weavers in Chunar acquire an identification card. The benefits of this step are listed below :

1. An ID card would help them gain access to multiple benefits like availing medical facilities from the local health centers.
2. It would help to scale the benefits under various government schemes.
3. Such identification would prevent misleading of funds.

It would ensure that all local weavers are covered under the benefits provided by the government and other agencies.

Toilet & Hygiene Project



Sewa International has installed more than 200 toilets under various toilet installation projects in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, including 20



toilet installations in and around Lucknow. The funds for this

initiative were raised by Sewa International USA. One of the reasons for the high drop-out rates from schools, especially among adolescent girls, is due to the fact that there was an absence of a usable toilet in the schools. Our team, led by Set. Jaye Ramanan, supported by Shri Thiagarajan Ramanan, took the initiative of toilet installation in these schools. A special note of thanks to the Sewa USA donors whose continued support makes it possible to undertake such an impactful project.

Renovation of Existing Toilets – Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

During April, we narrowed down 20 schools on the basis of priority and commenced the first phase of the renovation of existing toilets. May has been a month of obstacles. Despite that, toilets in 8 schools are currently undergoing major renovations.

Pre-Project Donor Visit – Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Shri. Ganeshan, one of our overseas karyakarta and supporter of Sewa International, visited India to inspect a project we had proposed a few months ago. He interacted with the staff and children of Olcott Memorial High School and Aadi Dravida Government School in Tamil Nadu. He assessed the need for an English & Hindi teacher, basic computer literacy, along with replacing toilets.



Enabling Change – Sewa USA

Sewa USA has made its mission of serving the underprivileged a reality in the United States, around the world & especially in the Indian context. It is our pleasure to share some of the recent highlights from the Sewa USA chapter in the following report.

Memorial Day Weekend – ‘Abhyas Varg’

The Memorial Day weekend saw a very busy beginning for the Sewa Houston Team. Here are the highlights of the proceedings that took place :

- **Thursday and Friday:** The Family services team organized an **‘Abhyas Varg’** or training workshop and held discussions with **Shri Girish Mehta**, our National Advisor, and founder of **The Indian Circle of Caring**. A total of 10-hours of Abhyas Varg took place on Thursday and Friday evenings with Sachin, Dabir and the Family Services team. A total of **20 ‘karyakartas** or workers attended the workshop. Girish’s tireless energy, enthusiasm and the ability to inspire ’is praiseworthy.
- **Friday evening – Moments of Pride:** Sewa got the prestigious **G7 award** by the **‘Houston International Trade Development Council’** for **“Outstanding Nonprofit”**. **Shri. Gitesh Desai** (Houston Chapter President), received the award at their Gala on Friday which was accompanied by **two congressional recognition's** and a **congratulatory note from White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islander**.
- **Saturday Morning:** We witnessed the launch of the **2018 Get Inspired Houston Summer Internship (GIH) with 9 interns** – the first orientation meeting for the interns was held at the Sewa office where they were greeted by the Sewa Houston Team. This is the 6th consecutive year of summer internship where young adults spend more than 200-hours over a period of 2-months volunteering on projects related to the education of underserved and refugee community in the **Sewa Houston AmeriCorps**.

During the session, **Andrea Garcia**, (Houston VISTA volunteer) said in her speech :

“I can tell you truly from my heart, based on my 2 years of active association with Sewa that this is the organization where money really reaches the needy – the dedication of the Houston Sewa team is an inspiration. It is humbling to see the trust bestowed on Sewa by volunteers and supporters alike. Looking forward to an eventful summer ahead. It is truly a bliss to witness the dedication of a passionate and selfless team.”

Testimony of A Young Girl – Sewa USA Impact



The following is a heart-warming email from a young girl, who had made a request for 2 laptops for her brother who is graduating as the Valedictorian of Tucker High School and herself. Here's an excerpt from the email of gratitude from the girl: "You and your Sewa International team put in your best efforts to ensure my brother and I get all the help we need during this difficult time- I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart... When you, Mr. Swadesh, responded back to me

saying that you would be willing to help me- I thought it was a true blessing. You found a generous donor for us, Mr. Sam Patel, for whom I cannot express enough gratitude. Good things do occur but they can't occur without those who think of doing good deeds for others, like yourself and your whole Sewa International Team, Mr. Yashwant Belsare, Mr. Raghav, and many others. It is better to do one's own duty, however defective it may be than to follow the duty of another. He who does his duty as his own nature reveals it never sins – Shree Krishna."



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