Soochna Seva

ANNUAL REPORT

SOOCHNA SEVA
WEST CHAMPARAN
BIHAR

2015

European Union

DEF
DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT *foundation*

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1. DESCRIPTION

1.1 Name of beneficiary of grant contract:

Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF)

1.2 Name and title of the contact person:

Mr. Balaji Madiq, District Manager of DEF in W.Champaran.

1.3 Title of the Action: Soochna Seva:

Facilitating information flow and management of Public Schemes for Citizen Empowerment and Good Governance in backward districts in India

1.4 Contract Number:

DCI-NSAPVD/2013/311-983)

1.5 Start date and end date of the reporting period:

January 2015 - December 2015

1.6 Target District (ies) or region(s):

The following blocks in Ranchi have been selected for the Soochna Seva Action:

- Gaunha
- Lauriya
- Mainatand
- Ramnagar
- Sikta

1.7 Final beneficiaries &/or target groups (if different) (including numbers of women and men):

10,000 BPL Families in 5 Blocks: 2,000 Scheduled Tribe families, 2,000 Scheduled Caste families, 2,000 Minorities, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and 4, 000 families from the general social segments who are socially and economically poorer.

20,000 total beneficiaries: 10,000 BPL families will be covered under the program. At least 2 individuals per household shall be covered.

8,000 women and girl beneficiaries: Out of the total 20,000 direct beneficiaries, at least 8,000 women and girls shall be covered in health and livelihood access programmes, especially child and maternal health care.

80,000 beneficiaries: Soochna Seva is expected to benefit a total of 80,000 beneficiaries, directly and indirectly, male and female, over a period of five years in five blocks.

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2. ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION ACTIVITIES

2.1 Executive summary of the Action

Soochna Seva has been successfully working and in last 2 years towards serving the community in making them aware of their rights and entitlements with regards to public schemes. Since its inception, Soochna Seva team has been working tirelessly to bridge the information gap that is persistent among masses. Team has been giving our best efforts in transforming people's opinion about Government schemes and policies. Today team is happy to share that the confidence level of the people have grown many folds with regards to these Schemes which at one point of time seemed unreachable to them due to multiple hurdles, including lack of awareness, misconceptions, crony middlemen to name only a few. Our team has been continuously working towards removing these hurdles. While the increased confidence amongst people on us has given us more responsibilities, it has given us renewed strength towards our commitment.

Thanks to the unique communication model that has helped in penetrating into the rural pockets and paving way in bringing substantial change in many people's life. Soochna Sevaks visit villages and interact with locals on spreading awareness about the objectives of Soochna Seva while the Soochna Seva Kendras act as hubs for further access to information and helping people resolve issue with accessing Schemes. The journey of the past year was definitely not an easy one as faced challenges and obstacles at every step, such as unfriendly geographical and climatic conditions, lack of basic infrastructure like roads, and lack of awareness amongst people. Still the work continued with dogged enthusiasm and came up with some wonderful case stories that speak their own tale and all together give a broader picture about the hard work that has been put forward by the team.

Project will strive to continue our best efforts in the forthcoming months to engage more and more people by empowering them so that they too can empower others. And in all our endeavors, you will always remain central in giving us the required support and strength. Given below is a snapshot of our achievement with respect to the target in the year 2015. The findings and experience of last year has made us realize the importance of focusing on quality service rather on achieving numbers.

In W.Champaran, DEF is implementing Soochna Seva in five Blocks such as Gaunha, Lauriya, Mainatand, Ramnagar and Sikkta. Out of these five blocks Gaunaha and Ramnagar has significant number of Tribal population, Sikkta and Lauriya has significant number of minorities and Maintand has some features of semi urban and is a mix of everything. Despite the landmass being highly fertile, the political economy of the landscape does not allow substance level of agriculture. Lack of irrigation in these areas makes agriculture non-remunerative and seasonal. This has resulted in searching for sustenance as daily-wage workers and does sub-sustenance agriculture.

In the second year, Implementation of the Soochna Seva program has been kicked off with Old Age Pension Scheme, Paddy Insurance and Bal Sansad Yojana. Then subsequently other schemes such as Kisan Credit Card, Irrigation well, MGNREGA, Employment Card and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana also gained speed. This year lot of outreach has been done in terms of liaising with government bodies, collaborations with local NGOs etc.

The table below shows the status of the Soochna Seva implementation in West Champaran.

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Table 1 Scheme-wise achievements according to the categories are given below

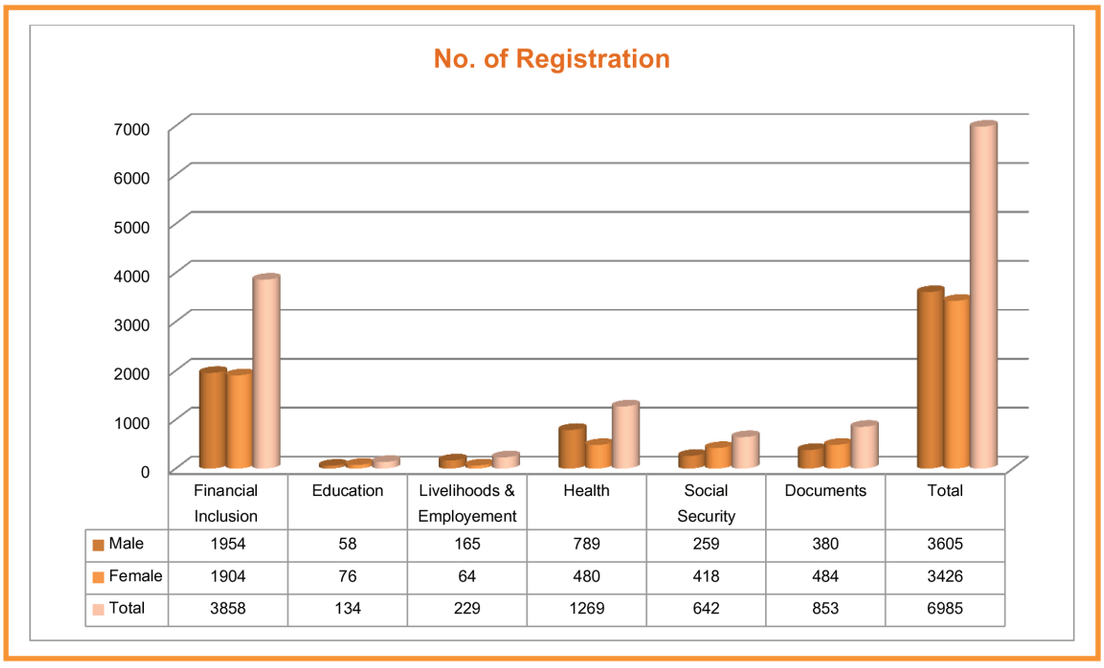
Work	Key Area	Scheme Name	Application Submitted		Total	Application Approved		Total
			Male	Female		Male	Female	
Individual Schemes	Financial Inclusion	PMSBY (Accidental Insurance)	580	463	1043	544	449	993
		PMJJBY (Life Insurance)	1374	1441	2815	1237	1327	2564
		Sub total (A)	1954	1904	3858	1781	1776	3557
	Health	Shawksh Bharat Abhiyan (Toilet Construction)	717	251	968	717	251	968
		Vaccination	20	17	37	20	17	37
		Janni Suraksha yojna-JSY (to promote institutional delivery of babies on Govt. hospital)	0	17	17	0	17	17
		PNC	0	155	155	0	155	155
		Checkup	52	40	92	52	40	92
		Sub total (B)	789	480	1269	789	480	1269
	Employement	MGNERGA (100 days job gurientee scheme)	95	56	151	26	12	38
		Matasya (for water & Sanitation)	1	0	1	0	0	0
		Earthquake Compensation	11	6	17	7	3	10
		Subsidy	24	1	25	24	1	25
		Crop Damage	34	1	35	34	1	35
		Sub total (C.)	165	64	229	91	17	108
	Social Security	Old Age Pension	223	128	351	43	36	79
		Indra Awash (Assistance for house construction)	4	117	121	0	18	18
		Kanya Vivah Yojana (Assistance at girls wedding)	0	72	72	0	44	44
		Special Ability Scheme	32	18	15	13	0	13
		Kanya Samridhi Yojna (we. Of girl child)	0	4	4	0	4	4
		Widow Pension Scheme	0	79	79	0	18	18
		Sub total (D.)	259	418	642	56	120	176

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Work	Key Area	Scheme Name	Application Submitted		Total	Application Approved		Total
			Male	Female		Male	Female	
Institutional Scheme	Education	Scholarships	2	1	3	0	0	0
		Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (Universalization of Elementary Education)	51	69	120	51	69	120
		Integrated Child Development Scheme	5	6	11	5	6	11
	Sub total (E.)		58	76	134	56	75	131
	Scheme total (A+B+C+D+E)=F		3225	2942	6132	2773	2468	5241
Community Services	Documentation	Aadhar Card (UID Card)	235	383	618	191	235	426
		Birth Certificate	6	10	16	6	7	13
		BPL Card	0	1	1	0	0	0
		Residintial Certificate	3	8	11	1	8	9
		Cast Certificate	14	9	12	10	9	19
		Bank Smart Card	3	13	16	3	13	16
		LPC	5	0	5	5	0	5
		Creamy layer	1	0	1	1	0	1
		Death Certificate	1	6	7	1	2	3
		Election Voter Card	14	7	21	0	0	0
		Disiability Certificate	67	42	109	65	41	106
		Income Certificate	10	2	12	10	2	12
		Farmer Credit Card	1	0	1	1	0	1
		Farmer Crad	20	3	23	20	3	23
Documents Total (G)			380	484	853	314	320	634
Grand total F+G			3605	3426	6985	3087	2788	5875

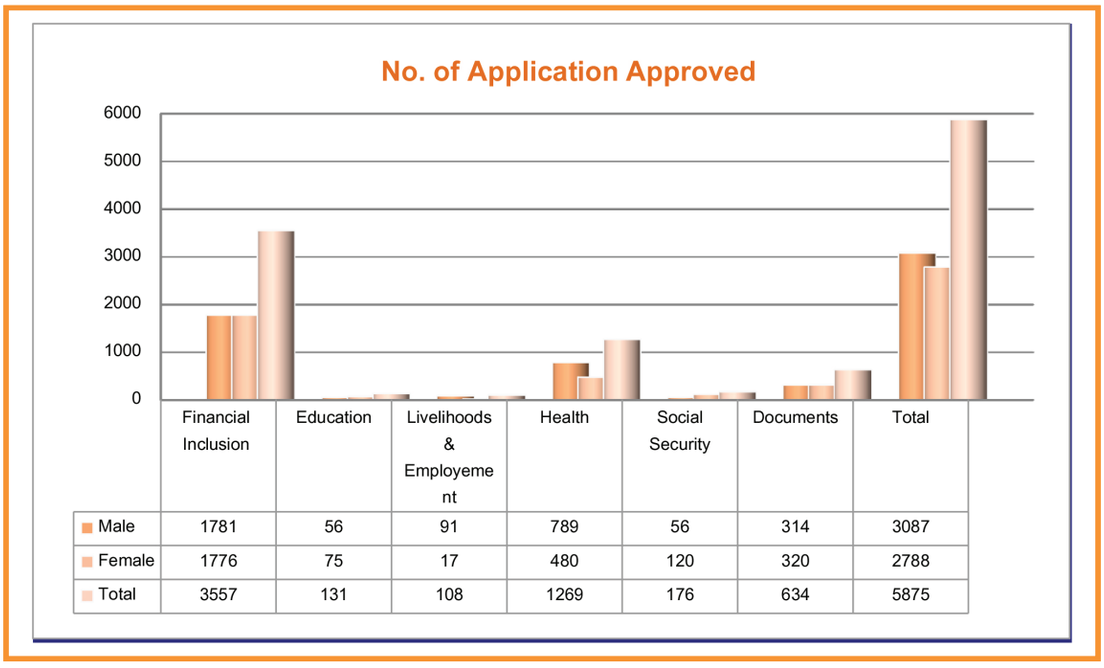
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Graph 1 Categories wise registration details



	Financial Inclusion	Education	Livelihoods & Employement	Health	Social Security	Documents	Total
Male	1954	58	165	789	259	380	3605
Female	1904	76	64	480	418	484	3426
Total	3858	134	229	1269	642	853	6985

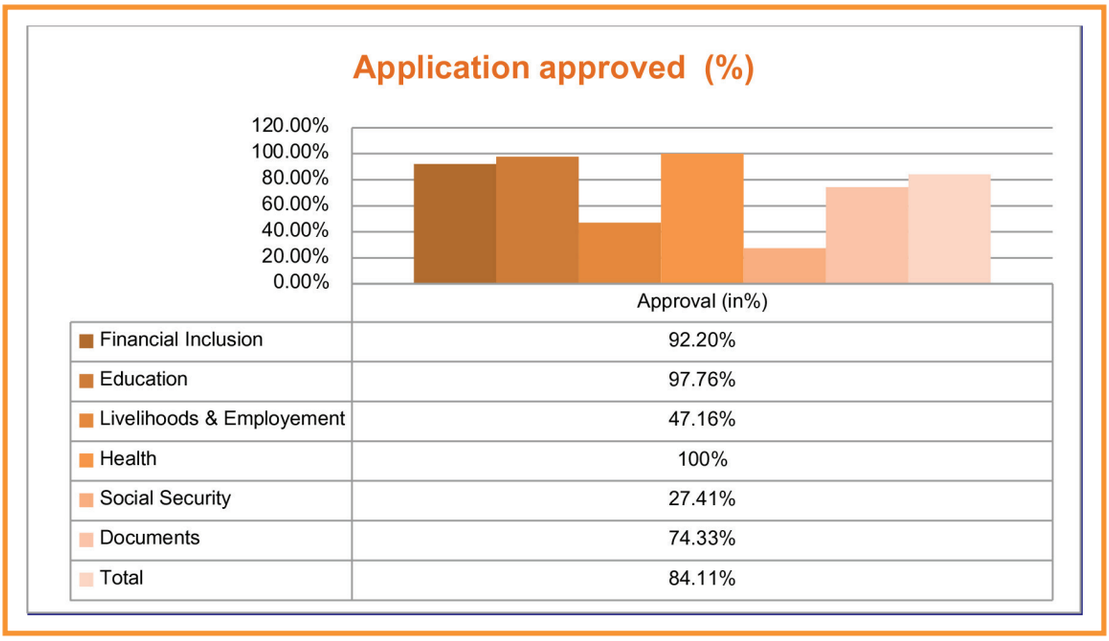
Graph 2 Categories wise application approved



	Financial Inclusion	Education	Livelihoods & Employement	Health	Social Security	Documents	Total
Male	1781	56	91	789	56	314	3087
Female	1776	75	17	480	120	320	2788
Total	3557	131	108	1269	176	634	5875

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Graph 3 Categories wise application approved in %



Area Profile (a brief)

W. Champaran district of Bihar state was carved out of Champaran District in the year 1984. The geography of the area is such that Goverdhana range, a mountain chain forms the Indo-Nepalese border. Out of this range many rivulets flow which are tributaries of a major river Gandak. These rivulets make this land the most fertile and rich in vegetation. They also help in maintaining high ground water level all year round. Good land fertility and high water table has made this district a high population density district.

Table 2 Below table highlights the profile of population in the district

Population Profile	
Population	3935042
Male	2061110
Female	1873932
Sex Ratio	909
Population Density	753/sq.km.
Male Literacy	65.59
Female Literacy	44.69

Table 3 The number of educational institutions in the district

Education	
No. of Primary School	1340
No. of Middle School	284
No. of High School	68
No. of College	3
No. of ITI	1
Male Literacy	65.59
Female Literacy	44.69

National Highway 28 B is the major road along with many state roads connecting people. Narkatiyaganj and Bettiah are the major railheads of the District. There are two small airstrips supporting landing of small aircrafts at Valmiki Nagar and Bettiah.

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Agriculture is the main occupation and three crops types of crops are cultivated namely Bhadai (Autumn) crop are Maize and Sugarcane; Aghani (Kharif) crops are Paddy and Potato and Rabbi crops are Wheat, Barley and Arhar. Due to its location in Tarai region, the annual rainfall is 56 inch. The proximity to Himalaya gives W.Champaran one of the major river namely Gandhak which support the irrigation in the region. Along with Gandhak, Tirhut, Tribeni and Don Canals support sugarcane producers of the District.

Table 4 Area of coverage, blocks and panchayats and serving benefits:

Sr. No.	Gauanha	Lauriya	Mainatand	Ramnagar	Sikkta
1	Gauanha	Baghai Basvriya	Inarwa	Bakhari	Balthar
2	Matiyaria	Deaura	Mainatand	Parsouni	Bhawanipur
3	Mahui	Dhobani	Pirari	Manchangwa	Gauchari
4	Rupwaliya	Lakad Sisahee	Sakaral	Sarhatwa	Kathiya Mathiya
5	Sithi	Telpur	Tolachapriya	Siphai	Sikkta

Table 5 Staff details working in 5 SSKs:

Sr. No.	Name	Designation
1	Prabhu Kumar	Block Coordinator
2	Sukhdev Kumar	Fellow
3	Mansha Kumari	Digital Literacy
4	Vinit Mishra	Call Centre
5	Prakash Kumar	Fellow
6	Jyouti Kumari	Digital Literacy
7	Amlesh Kumar	Block Coordinator
8	Akshay Kumar	Block Coordinator
9	Satyaprakash Kumar	Fellow
10	Sanjya Kumar	Fellow
11	Rajiv Kumar	Fellow
12	Loknath Kumar	Fellow
13	Arvind K Rao	Block Manager
14	Anil Kumar	Fellow
15	Tanzir Alam	Fellow
16	Mamta Kumari	Digital Literacy
17	Balaji Madiq	Dist. Manager

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4. OBSERVATION OF RESULTS (MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS)

With humble beginning the team of twenty Soochna Mitr (information friend) tried to reach the last person in the most remote village. Facing all the odds, the team has been able to reach 6985 people and was able to assist 5875 people. Out of these, 5875, the team was able to bring 3557 people to the financial mainstream by opening a saving account and by getting insured at very low premium.

Soochna Mitr sweated so that one hundred seventy six people could get in to social security net and live a dignified life of their own. Soochna Mitr realizes the importance of education in one's life therefore they through their hard work put one hundred thirty one (seventy five of them being girl child) children in to formal schooling system.

MNERGA though being a noble cause is marred with malpractices and n number of leaks in these difficult situations Soochna Seva mitr with the help of Lokpal of MNERGA were able to give justices to 108 people by providing them their dues from govt.

Many are not able to get their entitlements due to lack of documents one requires to produce to avail the entitlements. Soochna Mitr realized this bottleneck and organized various camps and assisted people in getting these documents without a middle men. Six hundred thirty four people were able to get their documents.

This year Soochna Seva in W. Chamaparan is taking a leap by introducing Soochna Seva Vahan to the team. This Vahan is equipped with Information and Communication Tools which will help in spreading the information wide and far. With the vahan the team is expecting to reach the last person faster.

4.1 Type of the beneficiaries:

Majority of the beneficiaries are from Below the Poverty Line, minorities, daily wageworkers, laborers etc. Major chunk of the population live in the rural areas and their occupation is either working in the field or employed by the ongoing work. In the year-2015, project has covered more areas and worked for primary students, middle age students, elder students and handicapped students and worked for their education, training, health and for employment. Old age people, widow women, house hold women and pregnant women generally left behind and not get benefitted, but in this year Project has worked for all these people and they have been benefitted with the social security schemes. Project has covered all areas and makes them benefitted.

4.2 Outcomes of the project

Project has started this project with a vision to reach out to maximum number of villagers and empower them digitally, making them aware about the various schemes and programs available for them. Most of these schemes were not availing by the villagers due to lack of knowledge. Over a period of time, project has come to a level where people are taking the ownership of the programs and they are showing more interest to know about the Govt. running schemes and how they can get benefit out of it. Through Soochna Seva camps, we were able to reach out to the below poverty line populations, daily wage workers, students, women and children and made them aware about the benefits they are availing now through every key areas.

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4.3 Learning

Team regularly visit in the villages and meet with the villagers who are unable to fulfill the demands of life because they have limited financial support and bound to live dilapidated life. Project has learned from them that their life is so difficult but they never surrender and face the hardships in their life and these things inspired and motivated us to work even hard for them.

It is also learnt that how we can work and could manage to work with different type of people. The most important learning is to know about their culture and life style and develop a relationship with them to execute the program successfully. It is also learnt that regular visit and awareness program can change their mind-set and organize more camps and occasionally workshop is also vital asset to uplift the moral of the villagers.

4.4 Challenges faced

The following were main challenges faced by team

- Winning the trust of People amidst empathy
- Bottle-Necks by middle-men
- Lack of trust from govt. agencies
- Information being withheld
- Lack of Discipline
- Lack of Communication
- Lack of understanding of the system

The villagers and the poor people who come from below poverty line they are illiterate people and have no awareness at all, our team members provide knowledge about the public schemes which they should avail, team fill their forms and generate awareness about the schemes and programs.

Proejct came to know that many people have no documents and required papers like income certificate, death certificate, Bank Account and other important papers and many of them showed lack of interest, our team members ensured the required documents and process to avail these benefits.

4.5 Innovation

In the early stage of project implementation the team had tough time dealing with the block officials and often faced opposition by the middle man. To overcome this team thought of strategy by which they invited the Block officials to Soochna Seva activities for instance honoring them as chief guest for flag hoisting ceremony on Republic Day and Independence Day. This helped in building a rapport with the officials and helped in bridging the gap. Gradually they started helping us. The team also lends its hand to the administration in their need this way the distance between the two had narrowed. Absences of documentation for availing the benefits were the biggest hurdle so the team orgainsed many camps in which Soochna Seva team helped the villagers to get these certificates at their door step at much affordable rates. This built a rapport with the community.

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5. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT



It is vital issue and tough challenge for everyone, and accordingly team has launched some new and innovative methods to increase income and try to maintain staff appointment in right shape.

Project has started visiting schools to literate the students digitally and also with the edge of information on public schemes in order to spread awareness at next level and generate revenue.

SSK will be equipped with wifi and internet which will enhance access to online services. In addition some equipment i.e. lamination machine and color printer will attract villagers and students. By providing complete facility and trust we can earn more money for the project.

6. LIAISING WITH THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS



We are working in all the major areas, either for individual or institutional benefits, but for better result it is necessary to make stronghold liaising with the stakeholders and government administration at block, district and state level. In this regards team regularly organize meetings with govt. officials and elected representatives.

7. CASE STORY



1. Raju Kumar, a student with poor financial background, is now a student of Bachelor of Technology in an engineering college in Udaipur, Rajasthan. His journey from his village, Parsouni, to the engineering college was not smooth. The major obstacle was: he had no money to pay his college fees.

He visited Soochna Seva Kendra in Ramnagar block, West Champaran and inquired about government scholarship available for SC/ST students for higher studies. The team briefed him about the scheme and assisted him in applying for the scheme. He lacked a few documents required for applying. The team helped in getting the required documents made and in a few days time, he submitted all the required documents such as caste certificate, income certificate of his father, student's identification proof and his class 10 and 12 mark-sheets at Kalyan Vibhag.

Since Assistant DPRO was in good terms with the block coordinator of Soochna Seva (West Champaran), Raju's application process without any delay. In a month, he received Rs 50,000 scholarship that he used to deposit as admission fee for the college. He thanked the team in helping him to realize his dream.

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2. Rinku Devi, (21) is a resident of Parsouni village in Ramnagar block of West Champaran. Devi, who belongs to a poor family, was unable to pay for medical treatment required during her pregnancy.

The Soochna Seva team met her during their one of their door-to-door visits. After knowing her ignorance about the government scheme available for maternal and natal care available in government run health centres, the team took an initiative to help her.

The team connected her with one of the ANM workers in Parsouni village. In the month of January, Rinku's treatment began at Bakhri Bazar health centre. Later, the team connected her with an Aasha worker who sent her to Ramnagar hospital for other necessary medical check-ups and also to know the health of the baby.

For nine months, the team regularly followed-up to know her medical status. In September, she gave birth to a healthy baby in the Primary Health Centre. She thanked Soochna Seva for timely help and support to meet her medical requirements.

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3. Ramraj Mahato: Soochna Sevaks from Ramnagar block were busy steering a community meeting to inform people about the social security schemes when Ramraj Mahato, one of the participants, confronted the team that such schemes are hoax. The team calmed him down and exchanged dialogues to know the gravity of his situation. Through him they learned that he has been shunned by the officials at BDO office. Because he had applied for Vridha Pension Scheme in 2014 and to know about the status he has been visiting the office till then. To his dismay each time he was scolded and thrown out of the office.

The team assured him about their assistance and requested him to produce the receipt that he received after filling the application form. The team inquired the officials at BDO office about the same and got to know that the application has been accepted and the money has also been sanctioned. The officials had even informed Ramraj Mahato about it but he was unable to make out what they meant.

The team then interacted with Gram Sevak and communicated him to register Ramraj Mahato's name in the register of beneficiaries. Initially he denied and made excuses but the Soochna Seva team agitated for this. Finally he agreed and Ramraj received his pension of rupees 400 per month.

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4. Mohan Shah, a resident of Parsouni village, approached Soochna Sevaks to get his land back from a local goon. Shah contacted the team en route to Parsouni village outside the Parsouni Police Station. Initially, the team could not comprehend his problem but after a few dialogues they understood that the police was not helping him to sort out his problem. As he and his wife were thrown out of their house by hooligans sent by Asim Khan.

Komal Kumari, block coordinator of Soochna Seva, expressed her inability to solve his problem as such issues are beyond the framework of the project. But after repeated pleas of Mohan Shah, she phoned the Sub-Inspector (SI) and requested him to look into the matter.

The SI arrived at the spot with a few constables and inquired Mohan Shah about the incident. Shah told that he settled in Parsouni village 20 years ago and Asim Khan gave him a piece of encroached land to Mohan for Rs 20,000. A few months ago, Asim asked Shah to evacuate the land and take the money back. Mohan alleged that when he denied, Khan sent a couple of hooligans to throw his family out. Later, he wanted to lodge a complaint against Khan but the officials did not register the complaint. Hence, he sought assistance of Soochna Seva team.

Shah presented documents to SI to prove that he had given money to Khan. The SI inquired and found out that the land is a government land. According to encroachment law, anyone, who has been staying on a land for more than 20 years, is eligible to stay. Finally, his efforts brought fruitful result and the police assisted him to get his land back. Mohan thanked the Soochna Seva team for their help.

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8. ACTIVITY PICTURES



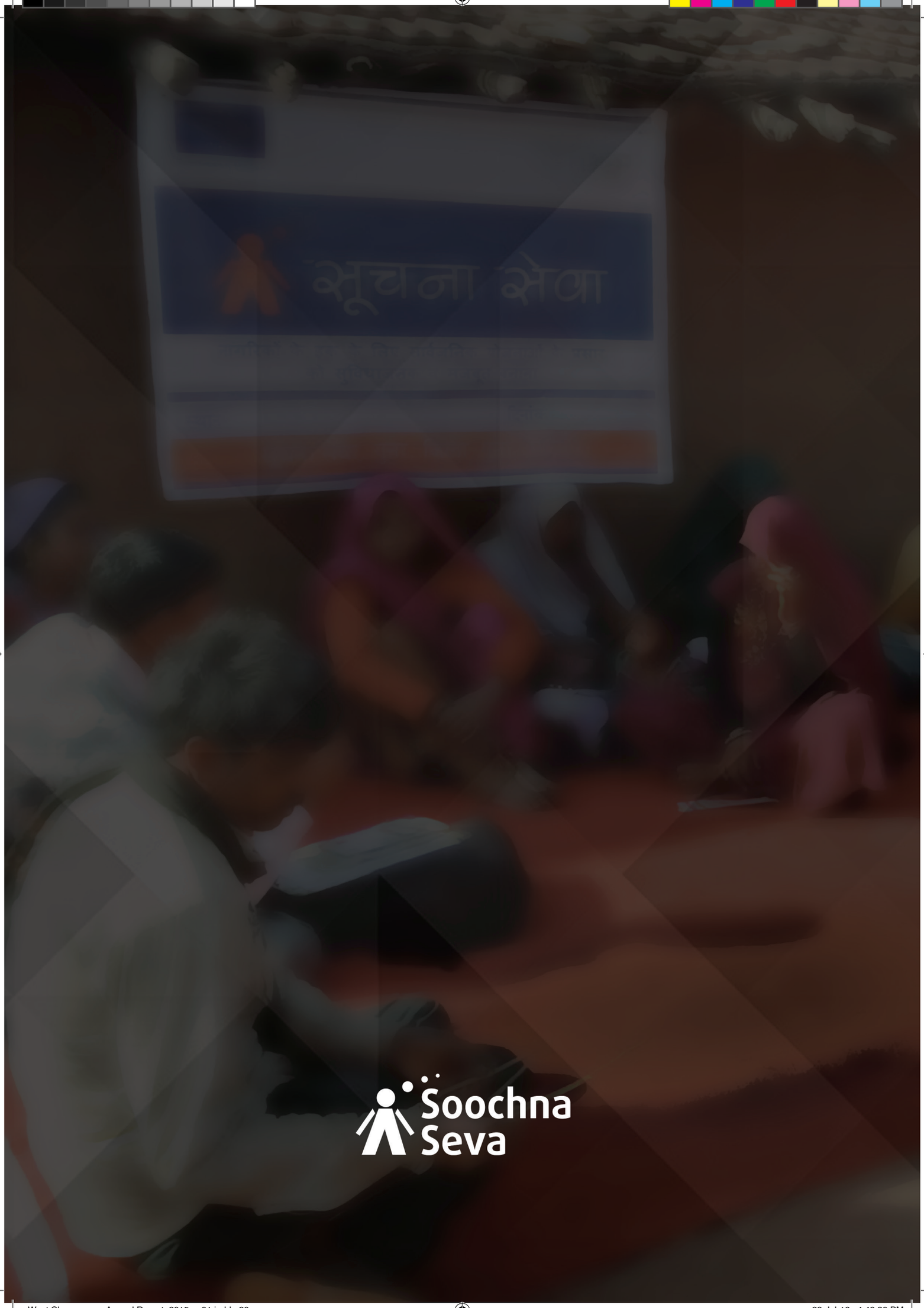


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