

Women’s day: Our impacts on health and nutrition and initiatives so far with local technologies , skilling , rescue and relief.

Our organization, Vishwadeep Trust is registered with the NGO Darpan portal of NITI aayog with areas of nutrition, food and agriculture, renewable energy for post-harvest management as it impacts the shelf life and nutritional aspects. The trust is very feminine and is named after the founder’s grandmother Smt. Deepraji Upadhyaya and Mahapandit Vishwanath Upadhyaya, he had spiritual learning since childhood. He was the only child of his parents. When he was 13 years old he left his home at Bettiah, west Champaran and accompanied a group of sadhus / yogis who came from the Southern part of India and they were on their way to Himalayas (Muktinath Mahadev temple in Nepal. This temple is roughly 13 kilometres up from Pokhara. He got very hard trainings under various gurus for 13 years. He later went on to raise cows and distribute milk for free in his village. He would train young women in Sanatan Dharma teachings and later went on to assist Mahatma Gandhi ji in the Indigo revolt.



Our work is mostly focussed with rural India and victims of flash floods, migration affected. Our findings suggest that rural women have more limited access to productive resource, service education and employment opportunities while experiencing, excessive workloads and limited decision making power. We have very recently chosen Rong valley in Ladakh where there is forced nunnery & polyandry in the name of population control, equality as a result of lack of opportunities. Our goal has always been upliftment.

We wish to reduce rural woman farmer drudgery as she works for 3,485 hours on one hectare of farmland and there is no mention of her in budget and policy framework.



A strategy for acknowledging gender differences and determining key actions to **promote women's role** in implementation of programs is a part of our project preparation. Our innovations are devised keeping women in mind. Therefore they are light weight portable & affordable. The implementing technologies are locally made, women friendly, low cost, portable interventions such as solar cookers, solar dryers, solar lamps, millet threshers etc.

We noticed the Ladakhi women were still using the thaab, the local Ladakhi system that produces a lot of smoke, and we hence gave them Indian made portable solar cook boxes that have reduced 436 kgs of liquefied petroleum gas emissions, improved eye and lung health of women and children. The cook boxes reduce a lot of drudgery as the sun harnessed energy cooks meals automatically, that allows women to spend more time with their children and their attendance in school improved as well.



We have distributed low cost and portable **solar cook boxes** for



67 families of eco model village



save 536 Kg of LPG in a month



guarantees 250 sunny days of usage in a year.

The villagers are now making **solar cooked organic lunches** that include **solar cooked organic buckwheat biscuits and breads.**

We have Recently introduced

Solar technology in **Eco-Model** village Takmachik

which includes portable and low cost solar dryers for
hygienic and efficient post harvest management of organic produce



In one year , use of solar dryers will reduce 436 kgs of carbon emissions

With your help, We want to highlight the role of women in agriculture, a woman farmer works for 3485 hours on one ha of farmland, a male farmer works for 1212 hours and a pair of bollocks works for 864 hours. Since organic farming requires four extra hours on the field, we have given him

On an average a woman farmer is mostly anaemic and her drudgery is more than that of men and farm animals combined. Therefore, we came up with few interventions that were affordable and accessible, most importantly local.

We introduced local farming techniques of mushroom cultivation in the Himalayas, which include organic dhingri mushrooms that contains five times more iron than beef. The women were deeply engaged in the training sessions we provided in local Ladakhi, they learnt spawn making and very quickly started growing mushrooms in the hills. Once grown they used our dryer to dry it and market locally earning well and are feeling nourished well.

We have also introduced the solar dryer that greatly reduced the drudgery of post-harvest management as it reduces hill related accidents, back injuries, improve nutrition and color of yield, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 536 kgs in eight months per household. This was our frugal innovation designed by a lesser abled scientist, keeping in mind women farmers, old people who form the majority of agrarian population, very unfortunately. My grandfather was Shri Kalpnath Rai he would often discourage us daughters, granddaughters to cook or farm as it was laborious, he would say in earlier times women would only dictate few male family members to cook, farm properly and would engage in teaching, delegating, training etc. Our country was hugely matriarchal according to him.


विश्वदीप
VISHWADEEP
 SMALL LAMP IN A DARK ROOM

Training on mushroom cultivation to reduce Iron deficiency in Ladakh




विश्वदीप
VISHWADEEP
 SMALL LAMP IN A DARK ROOM

Distribution of oil expeller and oil filling machine for upliftment of tribal farmers.



We wish to reduce rural woman farmer drudgery as she works for 3,485 hours on one hectare of farmland and there is no mention of her in budget and policy framework. Another huge technological intervention that reduced drudgery of women was distribution of oil pressing and filling machines, earlier the women farmers would have to walk along with their male farmers some 35kms to have their oil seeds pressed and filled. Now each village has oil pressing machines to make mustard oil, apricot oil etc.

Exploitation of young children of farmers – my experience and work in Gwal Pahari, rescuing and uplifting gang rape victims.



We have also provided relief and rescue operations for child gang rape victims covering medical expenses, collecting donations, rescuing and shifting her to a shelter in Chennai along with help of Sai baba trust. One has to understand there is a direct correlation between gender violence and farming, I would like to be able to understand as mostly women do agricultural work in India, farmlands are mostly in rural areas, with less connectivity, no toilets and electricity. Men mostly migrate to cities to work as migrant labourers leaving their wives and children behind, making them very vulnerable to sexual predators. I had recently returned to New Delhi from England and had secured a project with India Today to work on a demo farm, I was also helping a friend with his farm to convert to be fully organic in GwalPahari, with my associates, Deepika Shreyasi, they were both young and wanting to help by working in remote areas like GwalPahari and difficult conditions. While I was driving back from the farmland there was a couple and a little girl who stopped my car, the mother just lifted her dress and showed a big scar to me, I was very traumatised and didn't understand what was she trying to do, she told me her daughter was gang raped by five men and they left her on the street, she needed money for their survival, the tragedy was so immense that the mother couldn't work, would always cry and got cancer, her father was a gwala (cow nurturer) and brothers would constantly weep, father lost business and faced social stigma as he was the father of a child rape victim, I was in deep state of shock witnessing her mark and listening to their stories, I called up few friends and arranged for medical help, worked for her justice with the Indian Police, some politicians, some media, Artemis hospital and there was no justice, In order to protect her and change their mind, I tried to shift the location in Delhi but she was not comfortable in the city. I consulted Buddhist chanting group they said they would pray about it, which was not enough and I prayed to Sai and consulted their trust, they were then helpful and helped us locate a couple in south India who had lost their daughter and adopted her, she started to heal and recover, I still help them financially and she doesn't want to return to New Delhi. Sai made me give 15 months of my life for unconditional service to this little girl.





**Covid mask
 and neem
 sanitizer
 making**

The Pandemic was a tough time, especially the first wave; it was a time of despair and crisis. Many people were forced to leave their homes and return to villages as a result of lack of opportunities, especially daily wagers, migrant laborers, old women, young students. In chattarpur mandir, where we were migrating thousands of people in buses back to their villages and feeding people, distributing roohafza and water, we came across an old woman in shackles, she said she couldn't find her young son and daughter in law, we tried to locate them by ringing their numbers they were switched off and out of network, turns out they turned it off and left her alone. She was a very docile and fragile old lady, the couple left her because they probably didn't want to take care of her, she was shattered we called many old age homes and vridh ashrams, but they were not operative and closed due to lockdown, we had to persuade sai ashram to give her support and asked the police to transport her safely. We were very disturbed about this incident but we continued to look after her.



**Distribution of back belt to
 reduce pain**



I want to take you back to 17000 feet above sea level, in the remote villages of Sham Valley , where only about one bus works between Leh and Takmachik , Domkhar etc during the pandemic the busses were closed and the small shopkeepers , chemists had to close their shops , stores and the ladies were suffering with lack of medicines , medicated soaps and sanitary napkins , back belts for pain relief , we took the onus and raised some funds and transported it all the way to sham valley , 5 hours from Leh. Civil defense in New Delhi helped us a lot to transport everything in time in July 2020 when the region was hit by both pandemic and looming china crisis. There were ladies suffering from misabortions and failed pregnancies as gynecologists failed to show up to the hospitals and would often say they contracted the virus. Many women farmers and my colleagues were expecting a child and their unborn baby got the virus. It was a very traumatic time and we had to conduct many emergency counseling sessions and provide comfort sustenance. We have observed that a number of individuals and organizations, including many NGOs have come forward in this time of emergency, to help the needy with food supplies and rations. While we cannot express in words our gratitude towards everyone who has contributed to alleviate human suffering in this hour of need, we would like to stress that we at the Vishwadeep Trust are committed to the upliftment and welfare of families-in-need in a holistic and sustained manner. We plan to stay with these communities on a sustained long term basis and help them at every step in managing the current crisis. It will also be our endeavour to ensure that they come out stronger and more resilient to face any crisis in the future and also become more empowered to guarantee a bright future for their children.