

Annual Report of SANSAD

2017-18



South Asian Network for Social & Agricultural Development (SANSAD)

B-38 Upper Ground Floor, Freedom Fighters Enclave, IGNOU Road, New Delhi-110068

SANSAD'S Vision:

To make South Asia free from hunger and poverty

SANSAD's Mission:

To take global and regional initiatives for sustainable agriculture, rural development and human dignity aimed at putting collective pressure on policy makers.

SANSAD's Board Objectives:

- To undertake training, research, publication and build capacities to promote economic, social and gender justice. To promote a democratic, accountable and transparent system of governance and
- • create an enabling and supportive environment for development initiatives in South Asian countries. To build alliances and network at national and international levels in order to campaign
- and Advocate policies for the marginalized in agriculture, agricultural trade, farming systems, natural resources ecological balance and human welfare SANSAD's Interventions for Change SANSAD creates knowledge that contributes to both the speed and quality of poverty
- To catalyze, support and strengthen civil society in promoting sustainable livelihood, ecological agriculture, food sovereignty, and equitable trade with a focus on the human dignity of poor and marginalized people in South Asia.

SANSAD's Interventions for Change:

- SANSAD creates knowledge that contributes to both the speed and quality of poverty reduction, with a focus on assisting those who are trapped in poverty and ecological degradation.
- SANSAD organizes mass campaigns, public debates, advocacy work shop, builds alliances, and Forges partnerships between civil society of South Asia and Northern NGO's with similar objectives, on issues of agriculture, poverty, hunger, food sovereignty and social development.
- SANSAD attempts to go beyond activism to analyze policies and advocates at decision-making and implementation levels for policies and programmes in favor of the poor in South Asia.
- SANSAD brings together farmers and trade associations, academic institutions, like-minded voluntary organization on common platform to strengthen advocacy campaigns for policy changes with respect to hunger, poverty, agriculture and trade.
- SANSAD makes all efforts to involve the rural communities in all advocacy efforts. SANSAD is continuously developing strategies to defend the livelihood of South Asia's poor and hungry. SANSAD is developing a resource centre that will function as nodal agency for research, documentation, collection, analysis and dissemination of information and reference materials.

1. Overall Progress:

In March 2017 financial support from Japan Fund for Global Environment (JFGE) and RKK ended as three years of their continued financial support was maximum as per their policy guidelines. Although they are in the process of revising their policy but by the time our project was ending till that time it was not revised and approved by their committee. With this SANSAD decided to continue its project with their own fund but with limited activities.

A) Participation in Meetings/ Seminars:

1. LEADS Board meeting: Anil K Singh being Chairperson of LEADS, participated in the Board meeting in Ranchi on April 6th 2017.
2. Participated in Preparatory meeting for Gandhi yatra in JNU campus on May 3rd 2017
3. Anil K Singh was in USA from May 12th to June 16th 2017
4. Anil K Singh participated in Board meeting of Centre for World Solidarity on July 15th 2017 in Secundrabad.
5. Anil K Singh participated in VANI Annual meeting held in Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, New Delhi on September 5-6th 2017.
6. Anil K Singh participated in Board meeting of Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) held on September 9th 2017.
7. Anil K Singh participated in National Consultation on Budget organised by CBGA in New Delhi on September 19th and 20th 2017.
8. Anil K Singh participated in Board meeting of Charkha held on September 25th 2017 at Helpage office building.
9. Anil K Singh participated in Board meeting of LEADS Trust held on September 27th 2017 in Ranchi.
10. Anil K Singh participated in meeting organised by Focus on Global South in New Delhi on October 12th and 13th 2017.
11. Anil K Singh participated in State Annual Consultative Meeting of CWS in Patna on November 2nd and 3rd 2017.
12. Anil K Singh participated in a seminar organised by Gochar Mahavidyalaya in Rampur Maniharan, Saharanpur on November 10th 2017.
13. Anil K Singh participated in National Annual Consultative Meeting of CWS in Hyderabad on December 8th and 9th 2017.
14. SANSAD organised several preparatory meetings for Gandhi Sadbhawna Yatra which was held on January 2nd 2018 in Delhi, January 12th 2018 at Patna, January 14th at Lucknow, and many after that in New Delhi.
15. Anil K Singh was in Thailand from February 6th 2018 to February 10th 2018 and received award on February 9th from former deputy Prime Minister of Thailand.
16. SANSAD organised Gandhi Sadbhawna Yatra begin from Betiharwa Gandhi Ashram in Champaran on March 12th and culminated on March 28th at Rajghat in New Delhi followed by a conference on March 29th at Gandhi Peace Foundation.

B) Gandhi Sadbhawna Yatra

Background:

The year 2017 marked the centenary year of Champaran Satyagraha, the first non-violent mass movement on the Indian soil, initiated and led by Mahatma Gandhi. Fresh from his South African experience, where a British educated lawyer turned into a social and political activist, Gandhi on his return to India, was almost unknown to the vast multitude of India. At the urge of his political Guru and mentor, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Gandhi decided to stay away from the political engagements and movements of his time. He decided to invest one full year to travelling all over India and understanding the country. He started taking parts in meetings and sharing his experience in South Africa where he fought a successful and long battle against racial segregation and humiliation.

In the meanwhile a remote district in the border areas of Bihar was simmering. Farmers were getting restless in Champaran on the issue of growing Indigo (Neel). In the Champaran district in the border areas of Bihar, farmers were forced to cultivate indigo under **tinkathiya** system. Under this exploitative system, the peasants were forced to grow indigo for their European landlords on the three- twentieths of their land holdings i.e. 3 kathas of Indigo cultivation on every 20 katha of their land. The British planters had taken huge chunk of land from the debt ridden **Betiya Maharaj** and were forcing farmers to cultivate indigo. Indigo was cultivated for commercial purpose but the farmers were given meager compensation. They could not grow crops of their choice. As a result, the farmers were trapped in loans, often leading to their torture.

Champaran Satyagraha, thus, is a great lesson on non-violent action. It was also a lesson of how political battles need not necessarily resort to secrecy and conspiracies. On the importance of Satyagraha, Gandhi said, "Those who would know my method of organizing farmers (kisans) may profitably study the movement in Champaran where Satyagraha was tried for the first time in India with the result all India knows."

Of late, despite his contribution, Gandhi has been caricatured. He has been taken up in symbols, and his ideas, his practice of Satyagraha, truth, and non- violence have been ignored.

In recent years, the constitution, the liberal, secular character of nation, the socialist character of development with common man as the focus has come under attack. Religious bigotry, lack of culture of debate and discussion, intolerance and hardcore capitalism has come to the fore. Diversity of the nation is under a pall of gloom. The looming threat of autocracy, subversion of judiciary in the face of executive pressure, power politics and the hunger to get power at any cost - are increasingly becoming the norm. Acquiescence of media has added to the worry.

The farmers are being robbed of their land without the assent of Parliament; water, forests and land (**Jal, Jangal, Jameen and beej**) are being snatched by government and leased out to corporate houses which are resulting in poor people especially from marginalized communities such as Dalits, tribals and women losing their livelihood.

Bihar government has planned yearlong celebration. A Gandhi circuit is being planned. Books on Gandhi are being released. Scholars are discussing Gandhi but concentrated only in Bihar. We want to spread Gandhi's message to national level.

Against this background, the civil society has a clear role. It should play its role in bringing Gandhi out of conference halls and amidst young generation.

SANSAD in collaboration with Sakhi, Sakhiree, BVHA, WNTA, Bihar, Shahbhagi Sikshan Kendra, PANI Sansthan, Gorakhpur Environment Action Group, Sharamik Bharti, ABSSS and many civil society organizations (CSOs) proposes a yatra from Champaran to Rajghat, New Delhi with a theme of SAPNA.

What is SAPNA: SAPNA symbolizes the theme of the proposed yatra. SAPNA, in Hindi, means dream. A dream for the future of India

S- Swachchhta/ Satya

A- Ahimsha

P- Pani/Prem

N- Nashabandi

A- Abhiyan

As it was planned earlier that yatra will start on October 2nd 2017 but due to several factors including Nikay election in Uttar Pradesh we could not organize at that time. Now it is proposed to start yatra on **March 12th** (Dandi March day) 2018 as Voluntary Action Day.

Strategies:

- A team of 10-15 volunteers will march from Champaran (Village Bhitiharwa) to Rajghat in Delhi by car/jeep. Yatra will be planned in such a manner that yatri get proper space to address large gatherings and also get proper rest at different locations.
- A small cultural team comprises of 5 persons from Sri Lanka will accompany yatri and enact dance and street play at different location to spread Gandhi message.
- Yatri will march on foot where habitation is there and where there is no habitation they will move on vehicles.
- Local Civil Society Organization will host them at different locations. Their roles will be to receive yatri on the border of the city, mobilize local communities for public meetings, mobilising print/electronic/social media and local speakers as well as politicians/ governmental officials etc. They are also suppose to take permission from concern authority) for yatra as well as for public meeting. They will also arrange meeting halls/ meeting grounds, tea/snacks for the participants of public meeting as well as accommodation and food of yatri.
- Route of padyatra (From Champaran to Rajghat, New Delhi) will be decided after discussion with local CSOs based in different locations of yatra.
- We will try to rope in either Governor of Bihar or Chief Minister of Bihar Shri Nitish Kumar to flag off yatra from Champaran with a large gathering of people. We will also try to rope in either Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Former President of India or Shri Arvind Kejriwal, CM of Delhi to receive yatri in New Delhi at Rajghat.
- It is proposed to organize yatra with monetary contributions/ donations from CSOs, NGOs, s and public at large.

- For fund raising it was suggested to explore from Cloud funding also
- An independent website/Facebook will be created to mobilize volunteers, mass media and resources and also to propagate ideas of SAPNA. This Facebook will also help in updating people about the yatra.
- At the end of the programme, SANSAD and partner organizations will come up with a booklet on the experience of yatra.
- All expenses related with Gandhi SadbhawnaYatra will be meet from donations collected from CSOs and public at large. It was decided not to accept any money from Government or corporate.

Gandhi SadbhwnaYatra:

Gandhi Sadbhwna Yatra comprises of 5 Sri Lankans, one Nepal and 15 from India started from Bhitiharwa village in Champaran on March 12th and culminated on March 28th at Rajghat in New Delhi after offering prayer and paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi followed by a public meeting organized at Gandhi Peace Foundation on March 29th 1018.

Gandhi sadbhwna yatra was flag off by Chairman of Zila Parishad Shri Sailendra Gadhwal and other speakers were Shri Kumar Rajesh Tinku, SSB Commandment, Narkatiaganj, Shri Nand Kishore Baitha, Member Anusuchit Aayog, Bihar, Shri Radhe Shyam Ji, President, Nagar Parishad, Smt. Rashmi Verma, Ex MLA, Shri Arjun Thapaji from Nepal and Prof Satish Kumar, Patna University. A large number of local people and children from Kasturba Gandhi school participated in the inaugural function and rally. Sri Lankan cultural team performed cultural show in the function.



<https://www.facebook.com/100002267794339/videos/1655054347913476/>

<https://www.facebook.com/100002267794339/videos/1655071714578406/>



After that Yatra reached Motihari in the evening of March 12th and a public meeting was organized on March 13th in Motihari in which more than 500 people participated. Women were in good number. Public meeting was chaired by noted Gandhian Shri Brij Kishore ji, former minister of Bihar. Smt. Suman Singh anchored the show. Guest speakers were Shri Bajrangi Lal Thakur, Shri Ram Sunder Sharma, Prof Satish Kumar, Smt Sashikala, Bimla Singh and Anil K Singh.



On March 14th 2018 Yatra reached Gopalganj where a public meeting was organized in a school in the day time and farmers meeting held in the evening. Shri Washim Bhai of Mahila Sishu Kalyan Sanstha was the local host.



<https://www.facebook.com/100002267794339/videos/1657046081047636/>

<https://www.facebook.com/100002267794339/videos/1657043824381195/>

On March 15th yatra reached Siwan where local people received the yatries on the boarder of the town with garlanding every yatries. Followed by a public meeting was organized in the town hall which was hosted by a local organization named Sakhiree and IPTA Siwan.



Same day yatra reached Basantpur where again a public meeting was organized in Gandhi Ashram. Local cultural team along with our cultural team from Sri Lanka performed cultural show.



On March 16th 2018 yatra reached Chapra where again yatries were greeted with garlands. After paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi, Jai Prakash Narayan and Rajendra Prasad yatra reached to Chandrawati Auditorium where a large public meeting was organized by local host organization.



<https://www.facebook.com/100002267794339/videos/1659255140826730/>

<https://www.facebook.com/100002267794339/videos/1659412834144294/>

On March 17th 2018 Yatra reached to Patna where Yatries were greeted with garland followed by a public meeting was organized at Bihar Voluntary Health Association.



On March 18th morning yatra reached Arrah where yatries were received by local people and immediately paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi of his statue situated at District Hospital. After that Yatra reached Buxer and stayed there at the night.



On March 19th yatra entered Uttar Pradesh and received by local people at Gazipur. Local Mayor of Gazipur hosted the yatries and a big public meeting was organized by local Municipal Corporation in their conference hall. Shri Vijay Singh Yadav, Representative of Chairman Zila Parishad chaired the meeting and guest speakers were Com. Janardhan Bhai, Ex President, Ramesh Bhaiya, Shri Ramesh Yadav, Anil Singh Yadav and student leader Mr. Biresh.



On March 20th yatra reached Varanasi where yatrics were received by hundreds of people at Kashi Vidyapeeth University. Vice Chancellor organized a big public meeting in their main convocation hall in which thousands of people including students, teachers and local people participated. A play written by Shri Tushar Gandhi was enacted followed by classical dance by Sri Lankan yatrics.

It is interesting to note here that yatrics got an opportunity to stay overnight in the village Nagepur which our Prime Minister adopted for development. On March 21 before leaving for Faizabad, school children of a local school organised a march in this village and send off the yatrics for Faizabad. It was really a very emotional occasion for all of us.



<https://www.facebook.com/100002267794339/videos/1671241189628125/>



On March 21st yatra reached Faizabad where PANI Sansthan hosted the yatra. A big public meeting was organized at village Chachikpur school campus. Villagers and school children performed a nuked natak which was appreciated by all.

In the night yatris interacted with youths who were getting training cum exposure from PANI Sansthan. It was really a very interesting session and number of valid questions was raised by youths.



On March 22nd Gandhi Sadbhawna Yatra reached Barabanki and local host organisation Sana Adarsh Sewa Samiti welcomed yatris in Gee Palace. Now we are moving to Lucknow where there is a public meeting in Lucknow Press Club at 3.00pm



On March 22nd yatra reached Lucknow where Director and Staffs of Sahbhagi Sikchan Kendra welcomed the yatries with garlands. A press conference was organized in the Lucknow Press Club.



On 23rd of March public meeting was organized by Sahbhagi Sikchan Kendra in its main conference hall.



On March 24th yatra reached Sahjahanpur. Yatries were welcomed at 3 places of the district. A public meeting was organized in a local School followed by another public meeting in Vinoba Sewa Ashram. Shri Ramesh Bhaiya and Bimlaji hosted yatra in their campus. While moving towards Bareilly one public meeting was organised in the village Mohamadpur Bhagat which falls in Hardoi district.



On March 25th yatra reached Bareilly where yatrics were received with great enthusiasm. After a small meeting held in a school with mainly teachers because of exam time students were not there. In Bareilly two public meetings were organised, one in the Doriya village and another in Roshan Kishori Sakcharta Kendra, Jatavpura village.



After Bareilly, yatra reached Moradabad where public meeting was organized in the afternoon of March 26th by local host organization. it was decided to approach Trithankar Mahaveer University (TMU) for a big public function. Vice Chancellor invited yatrics on next day for that. On March 27th morning a big public meeting held in their city center in which thousands of students and teachers participated.



On March 27th afternoon yatra reached Hapur and local people welcomed yatrics at two places. Immediately after reaching Hapur, first we paid respect to Mahatma Gandhi with garlanding and then homage to Dr. Ambedkar with offering flower and garlanding his statue. Local host organization organized a public meeting and press conference. Visit of Yatrics were also organized at Hapur railway station where Mahatma Gandhi were arrested while returning from Champaran. Station superintendent of Hapur junction welcomed the yatrics and donated Rs. 2100 to the group.



On March 28th morning yatries were welcomed by staffs and reporters of Dainik Jagran at their office. After that yatra moved for Rajghat. At around 1.00pm yatra reached Rajghat and after paying homage and respect to Mahatma Gandhi yatra was culminated.

After Rajghat yatries were received by Shri A Annamalai, Director of Gandhi Museum and Library at their campus and a tour was organized to see Gandhi Museum. Mr. Annamalai offered Angavatra to all yatries.



On March 29th a public meeting was organized at Gandhi Peace Foundation to thank all yatries. Shri Swami Agnivesh, Shri Urmilesh, Shri N R Mohanthy, Dr. Mahipal addressed the gathering. Meeting was facilitated by Prof. Pravin Jha. Team leader of the Yatra briefed about positive and negative experience of full 18 days of yatra. After that press briefing was also organized.



Farmers Concerns (Agrarian crisis) raised

1. Why one industry (Agriculture) which produces 100 times more than its raw material (Seed) are in loss where as **all** other industries which are producing less than its raw materials are in profits.
2. Deciding pricing of produce is not in farmer's hand nor control over market (Mandies). Virtually middlemen and dalals are controlling the markets, therefore it is wrong to say that this Country belongs to farmers but to dalals.
3. Farmers from Bihar as well as from Uttar Pradesh reported that procurement of rice done only of rich and influential farmers whose family members are in politics or bureaucracy.
4. Why Government is not implementing recommendations of M S Swaminathan Commission report?
5. It is strange that our godowns are full of food grains. Even many a times it is laying on railway yards and road side to rotten but people are dying with hunger.
6. Farmers complained that compensations given by government are so meagre which seems some times that governments are insulting us.

Lessons learned:

1. It was a great experience where several thousand people participated in this 18 days of yatra and local hospitalities provided by local CSOs was tremendous. All local host organizations tried their level best to serve yatries as per their capacities.
2. Sri Lankan Cultural team was extra ordinary and created a huge impression with their classical dance amongst public at large.
3. Big organizations were silent and despite of several requests to collaborate and participate they did not even bother to respond to mail and phone calls. We do not know why they were silent? May be because of having fear in their mind of repercussions from government.
4. Smaller and middle size CSOs supported in a big way.
5. It was noted that CSOs interest in Gandhi's value are no more there as very few NGOs activists participated in the yatra. Out of 21 yatries, 5 were from Sri Lanka, one from Nepal and rest was from India. Gandhi Sadbhawna Yatra started with 21 yatries but when it culminated at Rajghat it was only 9 yatries.
6. It was also observed during yatra that Youths knows very few things about Gandhi and his contribution in freedom struggle which was shocking news for all of us.
7. It was also observed that non of the big Gandhian as well as farmer's leader came forward to participate in this Yatra, may be because of our past credentials of non Gandhian.
8. Biggest surprise was non cooperation of majority of members from National organising committee and Bihar organising committee. They could not do anything as per their earlier commitments nor contributed financially.
9. Best programme was organised in Varanasi, followed by, Chapra, Bareilly, Siwan and Bhitiharwa. Local host organisations deserve special thanks.

10. Due to lack of orientation of participants, coordination was a big problem which should have been avoided. Ekta Parishad was ready to do orientation camp for two days but none of the participants turned up on time.
11. Handling of Sri Lankan cultural team was a big headache as they were not following Gandhian style lifestyle but expecting VIP treatments.
12. It seems that participants treated this yatra as an event and not as a campaign which we envisioned initially.
13. Many people who committed to contribute financially but back out at the last moment.
14. Driver of vehicles were not following Gandhi's value and started drinking alcohol immediately after entering into Uttar Pradesh. Videographer who were from Patna were taking side of drivers which created tension amongst other yatries.

Future Direction:

1. A well planned yatra will be organised in future with the same theme of SAPNA.
2. In future yatra, planning must be done well in advance which also include carefully selection of participants.
3. Based on experience of this yatra, precaution will be taken to avoid many such problems.
4. Route map will be decided based on our own mobilising strength.
5. Well planned strategy will be adopted in future yatra.
6. Orientation of yatries will be done well in advance and if budget is needed additional resources will be generated.
7. Yatries will be selected based on their commitments and values.

Governing Board meeting of SANSAD

During this financial year SANSAD Governing Board meet twice-one on 19th August 2017 and another on February 21st 2018 in SANSAD office, New Delhi.

Governing Board of SANSAD

The Governing Board of SANSAD comprises of seven persons, including the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary General and three members. At present, the Vice President's position is vacant. It will be filled by a woman member in near future. The present Board Members with their positions are as follows:

1. President K.S. Gopal Centre for Environment Concerns, Hyderabad
2. Vice President Vacant
3. Secretary General Anil K. Singh SANSAD, Delhi
4. Treasurer: Ms. Gurinder Kaur, Former Director of OXFAM America, New Delhi
5. Member: Ms. Bimla Singh, Director Koshis Ek Prayas, New Delhi.
6. Member: Sharad Joshi CECOEDECON, Jaipur Member
7. Member: Dr. Sanjai Bhatt, Delhi School of Social Work, Delhi

The Advisory Committee of SANSAD: The advisory group has two representatives from each of the major countries of South Asia:

Afghanistan

- Mr. Roz Mohammad Dalili, Executive Director, Sanayee Development Foundation
- Ms. Hangama Anwari, Vice Chair, Women and Children Legal Research Foundation

India

- Dr. Devinder Sharma, Chair, Forum for Biotechnology & Food Security, Delhi
- Mr. Atul Kumar Anjan, General Secretary, All India Kisan Sabha, Delhi

Nepal

- Dr. Rohit Nepali, Executive Director, South Asia Partnership International (SAP-I), Nepal
- Dr. Nani Ram Subedi, Coordinator, Culture, Equity, Gender and Governance, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

Pakistan

- Mr. Mohammad Tahseen, Executive Director, South Asia Partnership, Pakistan
- Ms. Najma Sadeque, Project Director, The Green Economics and Globalisation Initiatives, Pakistan

Sri Lanka

- Dr. Harsha Kumar Navaratne, President, Sewalanka Foundation, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Deshpriya S. Wijetunge, Director-General, Sri Lanka United Nations Friendship Organisation (SUNFO), Sri Lanka

Bangladesh

- Ms. Farida Akhter, Executive Director, Policy Research for Development Alternative (UBINIG), Bangladesh
- Ms. Rokeya Kabir, Director, Bangladesh Nari Pragoti Sangha (BNPS), Bangladesh

Maldives

- Ms. Jennifer Latheef, Council Member. Human Right Activist, Maldives

Staff Members of SANSAD

1. Secretary General : Mr. Anil K. Singh
2. Project Coordinator : Mr. Arvind Sharma
3. Assistant Agronomist: Mrs Bimla Singh
4. Account cum Administrator: Mr. K George Kutty
5. Care Taker: Mr. Abdul Sakur
6. Helper: Mr. Nitin Kumar
7. Manpower for Agriculture: Mr. Ravi Upadhyay

=====XXX=====