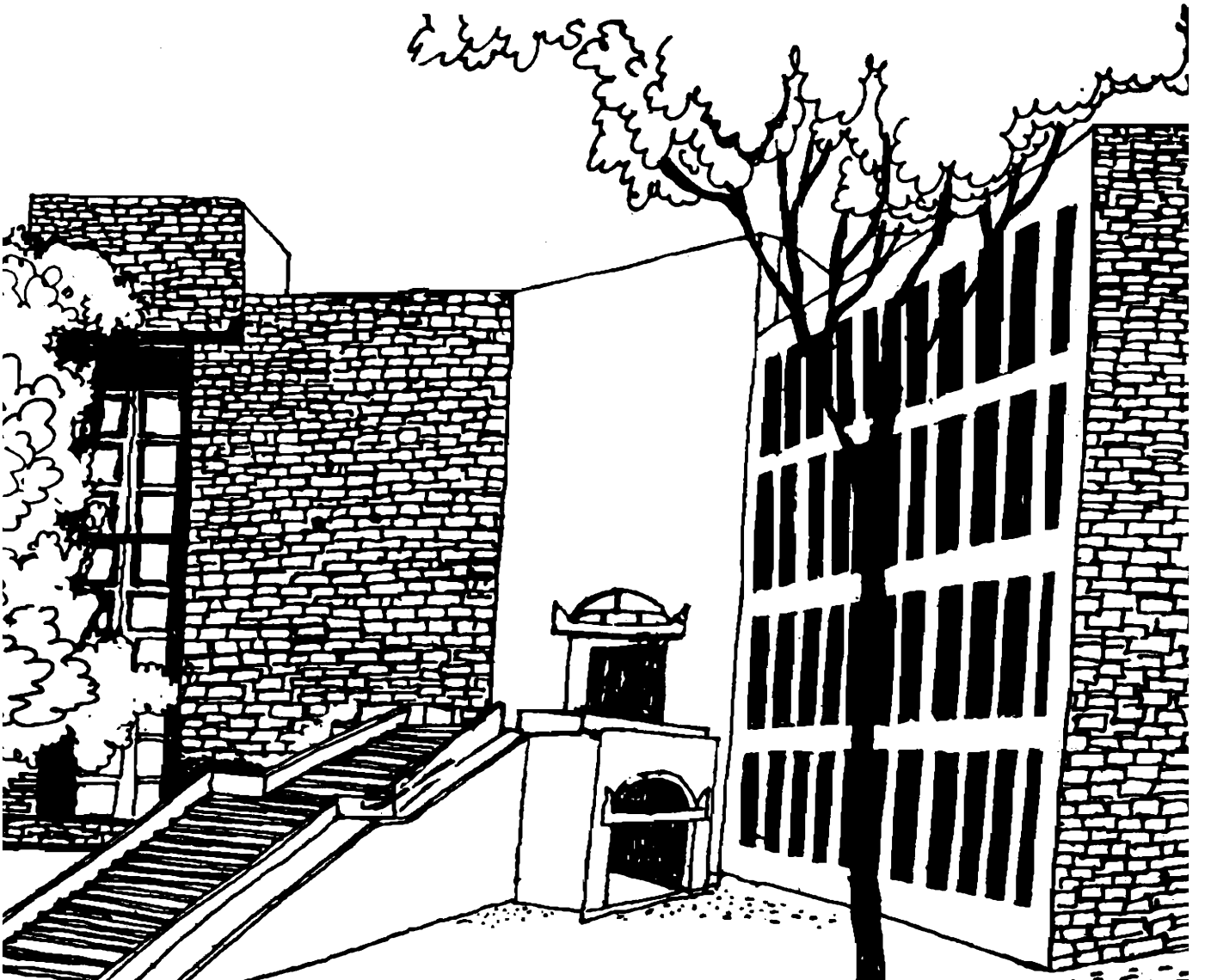




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Working Paper



EMERGENCE OF A SOCIAL CHANGE
ORGANIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF SIDH

By

Deepti Bhatnagar

WP1049



WP
1992
(1049)

W P No. 1049
August 1992

The main objective of the working paper series of the IIMA is to help faculty members to test out their research findings at the pre-publication stage.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
AHMEDABAD-380 015
INDIA

**EMERGENCE OF A SOCIAL CHANGE ORGANIZATION :
A CASE STUDY OF SIDH**

Prof. Deepti Bhatnagar

**Indian Institute of Management
Ahmedabad.**

Abstract

With an increasingly significant role being played by the voluntary sector in the country in addressing age-old problems of poverty, illiteracy and exploitation, there is a greater need to understand the processes of emergence and growth of organizations in this sector. A considerable number of researchers have studied the functioning and contribution of various non-government organizations. However, most of the studies are about successful NGOs -- organizations in the voluntary sector which have already arrived and have become well-known. The present study documents the process of emergence of a new NGO, SIDH (Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas) which has just completed three years of its existence.

This report traces the genesis of SIDH, its objectives and activities at the nascent stage, its strengths, problems and difficulties, and some dilemmas and tough choices that confront the organization at the present stage of its growth.

There is a growing appreciation in the country of the role being played by voluntary organizations in trying to address age-old problems like poverty, hunger, illiteracy and exploitation, etc. As the number of such organizations in the informal sector is growing, (there are more than two thousand NGOs in the country) there is a greater realization of the contribution made by such organizations. The tremendous potential of NGOs to function as effective agents of socio-economic change has evoked a lot of interest in government administrators, corporate managers, and academicians. Policy planners and programme administrators are increasingly involving the voluntary sector in the conception and implementation of various programmes. The direct contact and acceptability of NGOs at the grassroots level and their clean image make NGOs more effective instruments for passing down benefits of different government schemes than the often unwieldy, indifferent, and leakage-prone government machinery. The corporate managers are intrigued by the capacity of NGOs to sustain member commitment and energy despite being low on traditional motivators such as salary, promotional avenues and other organizational perks. Social scientists are fascinated by the new setting for research being offered by NGOs as social change organizations.

All the above make NGOs important organizations to be studied so that useful learning can be culled from their experiences. We report below the process of emergence of one such organization in the hope that our understanding of NGOs at a nascent stage can be strengthened.

SIDH

Society for the Integrated Development of the Himalayas (SIDH) is a field-based organization working towards community development in the Jaunpur block of Tehri Garhwal district in Uttar Pradesh. SIDH came into being in March 1989. In the few years of its existence, SIDH has been able to make its presence felt in the region. This report documents the growth of SIDH in the last three years and analyses the factors responsible for its success so far.

Genesis

SIDH was started by Pawan K. Gupta and Anuradha Joshi to help uplift the poorest people in the Himalayan district of Tehri. Jaunpur block where SIDH started its activities is a tribal area inhabited predominantly by Adivasis who trace their lineage to Pandavas. Unfortunately, Jaunpur was not given the official status of a tribal block; as a result the people in this block do not enjoy the privileges accorded to tribals by the government.

Pawan was working with a private organization before starting SIDH. A civil engineer who belonged to an affluent family, Pawan had always wanted to do something without personal motive or interest. He found his job of selling electronic equipment such as cash registers to be personally unfulfilling. He often felt that he was leading a dual existence with no relationship

between his personal values of selfless service and organizational objectives of profit maximization. The event of attending a Vipassana meditation camp provided an opportunity to Pawan to reflect on his own yearning to do something really useful with his life. The meditation camp strengthened his faith in his personal mission. It also gave Pawan the courage to make a complete break with his past and step into a future which was uncertain but which he could shape in accordance with his values and preferences. As a result he left his job and started preparations for starting a voluntary organization on his own.

Like Pawan, Anuradha was a young, educated, idealistic individual gifted with finer sensibilities of music and poetry. She used to spend her spare time in social work, holding literacy classes in slums, helping the poor women acquire greater control over their lives by awareness-creating street plays, talks, etc. Living in Calcutta where stepping out of one's house often meant stepping into poverty, Anuradha became particularly sensitive to the sufferings of the poor. This sensitivity was further heightened by her own experience of undergoing financial strains. Anuradha was often struck by the contradiction in her life. In her interactions with the poor illiterate women she urged them to break the shackles of mental servitude and learn to remould their lives through literacy and financial independence whereas in her personal life Anuradha continued to conform to the expectations of traditional roles of a woman, at the cost of her individuality and dignity. As time passed the inner conflict

intensified. The Vipassana camp attended by her gave her the resolve not to postpone any longer her dream of taking charge of her life and devoting it to working for the poor. (Having grown up in the mountains), Anuradha had always felt strongly drawn towards the sylvan beauty of hills. Influenced by this pull, Pawan and Anuradha decided that they would start their community work in the hilly area of Tehri. And that is how SIDH was born.

Anuradha and Pawan were widely read and both were deeply influenced by the writings of Mahatma Gandhi and Ram Manohar Lohia. Inspired by these writings and their own values, they decided to start community work and do it with professional integrity. Once this decision was taken, Anuradha and Pawan visited some well-known NGOs like Self-Employed Women's Association, Ahmedabad and Social Work Research Centre, Tilonia. They also met a number of individuals active in voluntary work so as to gain some understanding of this totally unfamiliar field. They soon realized that whereas such experience-sharing and talking to organizations and individuals was useful, key decisions about the kind of mission to be adopted, the nature of work to be done, the area to be served, etc., had to be taken by this twosome themselves. Anuradha and Pawan entered this new field like novices, armed with a strong conviction, boundless energy, and an almost child-like belief that eventually everything would turn out well. Indeed the progress of SIDH subsequently proved that little else was required.

Making an entry: SIDH carried out a preliminary survey of a few villages in the Jaunpur Block to determine the major needs of the people. They also visited villages and talked to villagers. Surveys only confirmed what was obvious to concerned observer. The villagers lived a life of stark deprivation; poverty and ignorance were their two major problems. However, in order to deal with the former, most villagers appeared quite clear that the latter had to be addressed, at least for the sake of a better future for their children. There was a strong demand for a primary school for children who had to walk for nearly 4-5 hours per day in order to attend the nearest village school. Looking at their own strength in the area of education, Pawan and Anuradha decided to make primary education their entry point. A primary school at Bhediyan, one of the villages in the Jaunpur Block was thus started.

Preparing for the challenge:

In order to start this venture both the financial and human resources were required and both were non-existent in the beginning. There were no funds available initially and the promoters had to use their private money.

The problem of suitable human resources was equally acute. As a policy it was decided to hire only local boys and girls as teachers in the school. This was important for two reasons. The first one was the value SIDH attached to the development of people and commitment to making them self-reliant. The promoters

attached high value to locating and developing local talent so that the young educated boys and girls could contribute to the growth of others in the village. Creating such an opportunity for growth, it was hoped would check the trend of migration to cities. A second reason for opting for local people as teachers was the probability of greater teaching effectiveness if the teacher happened to know the local dialect and have familiarity with the local culture, festivals, customs, etc. If education was to be imparted to villagers by their own people who could integrate it with the local way of life, it could be more meaningful to students and there was less chance that villagers would view SIDH's well-meaning efforts with suspicion. A major problem was identification of people who were sufficiently educated and motivated to become school teachers. Because of paucity of villagers with higher education, it was decided to offer teaching opportunity to any one who had passed class X. Potential teachers had to pass a simple test in arithmetic and Hindi. Thus, four local boys were identified. The second important task was to give them training. A systematic training schedule was drawn up which consisted of cognitive inputs in arithmetic and Hindi to strengthen the numerical and verbal competence of teachers; skill development in communication; inputs in teaching methodology including practice sessions; and, inputs aimed at attitude change to develop positive work ethic, self-discipline and respect for organizational norms. Soon on request from villagers, a second school was started at Talogi village and a third one at Gaonkhet.

As SIDH was trying to grapple successfully with the problem of human resources, help started arriving to alleviate the other important problem namely financial resources. One of the promoters received a fellowship from SRUTI, Delhi; SAMTA, Chakrata offered stipend for the trainees; Mahila Samakhya, Department of Education in the Ministry of Human Resource Development provided assistance for women's programme, and Uttarakhand Sewa Nidhi, Almora offered financial help for running balwadis, constructing toilets in rural areas and publishing. These offers were gratefully accepted. While providing spurt to the initial educational activity of SIDH, they also provided direction for the future. Thus SIDH started entering new but related activities in the areas where its schools had started running satisfactorily. The financial problems were significantly eased. Finally, the help received from SCF relieved SIDH of immediate financial worries so that the organization could expend its energies in developmental activities.

Objectives and Activities: Within the overall objective of doing something useful in the most backward areas of Tehri Garhwal, it was decided to concentrate on education, and let other activities evolve themselves.

Stakes of Villagers: However, for starting any activity a major precondition set by SIDH was the demand for the activity by people, and villagers' personal stake in the activity. A fallout of this stringent precondition was that villagers started learn-

ing the importance of their own effort. With the arrival of an NGO at their doorstep, a common expectation was that a lot of money would be pumped into the village, and services such as education and health would be rendered as charity. SIDH wanted to develop the personal stakes of villagers in each new activity so that they could experience a direct relationship between their effort and the desired outcomes. Besides, having stakes was also expected to develop in villagers a sense of ownership and responsibility towards a particular activity or programme. Therefore it was decided to start an activity only when villagers had made a contribution. Such contributions took the form of constructing a school building, making a room available for the school teacher or for a library, digging a 5' deep well for the construction of a toilet, etc.

Education

SIDH views education as the cornerstone of its developmental efforts. Its efforts under education include not only literacy but awareness-building, skill-development, and formal and non-formal education. Given the high value attached to education, it is not surprising that education became SIDH's entry point to villages. Many other activities which now form part of its programme portfolio such as health and hygiene, environment protection, community programmes, and income generation programmes, were adopted because of their strong linkage with education.

SIDH's community work started with the visits of its promoters to some villages in the Jaunpur Block. Surveys conducted by SIDH and discussions with villagers showed a strong need for primary schools in villages. In running the schools the key concerns of SIDH are to provide good quality education while simultaneously trying to inculcate in the young minds basic regard for punctuality, environment preservation, cleanliness and personal hygiene. This is sought to be achieved while retaining the curiosity and spirit of creativity among the young boys and girls. SIDH is currently running five primary schools called "Hamari Pathshala" in which 150 children are enrolled.

These schools follow the UP Board curriculum. Yet the topics covered in schools go much beyond the board curriculum to include discussions and projects on important issues such as village needs, environment, current events, and general knowledge.

New initiatives: While functioning within the educational board syllabus, SIDH is preparing supplementary instructional material which is aimed at developing an integrated picture from different disciplines such as history, geography, general science, etc. The aim in developing such material is to relate education to the local experiences of children most of whom have no urban exposure and cannot therefore comprehend textbook lessons which are totally at variance with their immediate reality. The supplementary material being developed by SIDH starts with the immediate

surroundings of the child and expands to include family, village, block, district etc. Also, the linkage among different disciplines is highlighted.

Instilling rigour in teaching: As the SIDH school teachers do not have formal training in the technology of teaching, it is important for SIDH to equip them in this respect. Teachers are trained to develop daily lesson plans, maintain a pre- and post-class diary and are given a training manual with monthly syllabus, poems, and stories. Teachers are also given a teaching guide for arithmetic. In order to develop strong work ethic, SIDH emphasises the importance of correcting student papers carefully, punctuality among teachers and self-discipline.

Training the teachers: SIDH occasionally holds skill-oriented training programmes, meditation camps and refresher courses for its members including teachers. Monthly meetings are held with teachers to discuss their daily lesson plans and academic difficulties.

Village school committees: In every village where Hamari Pathshala is being run, a committee consisting of five villagers is constituted to ensure the smooth running of the school. In its monthly meetings, this committee discusses the problems faced by students and teacher with regard to the school functioning. The committee meeting serves as a useful forum for consolidating the commitment of villagers to the school, and for giving feedback to the teacher.

Other Educational Activities:

The other educational efforts of SIDH include balwadis for pre-primary children, non-formal education centres where classes are run for students from class VI to X, and adult education classes.

SIDH runs twelve balwadis in the Jaunpur Block. The main aim of balwadis is to teach the young children the importance of clean environment, personal hygiene, and sanitation besides providing minimal instruction in the three r's. SIDH has produced an audio cassette of Hindi songs some of which are adapted from well-known nursery rhymes in English while others are especially composed for balwadi children. The songs contain nature-friendly themes and are rendered in simple, lilting notes which seem to celebrate the joy of living. The cassette is meant to be used as an audio aid for Balwadi teachers who are trained to use games and other material to let children have fun while they learn. SIDH has prepared a book of environmental songs and stories which can be used in Balwadis and schools and a Balwadi manual written for its Balwadi Teachers who are just class V pass.

The non-formal education centres are run at four places to provide instructional facility to needy students from class VI to X. The emphasis on different subjects is essentially need-based, yet a special effort is made to strengthen students' understanding of mathematics and Hindi. Beneficiaries include school

dropouts and those boys and girls who did not attend government run schools because of long-distance or poor quality of teaching. The centre at Mussoorie is used as a laboratory for SIDH to try out, modify and improve innovative teaching methodologies and new material before it is disseminated to Hamari Pathshalas.

Adult education classes have also been started in six centres. These are held in the evening and are primarily attended by young girls and women. Classes are conducted by school and balwadi teachers who get additional stipend for their effort. Libraries are also being managed in three villages and at Mussoorie.

As part of general awareness programme, SIDH organises study tours, occasional puppet shows by its own team on environmental issues in Himalayas, film shows, etc. Sometimes meetings of villagers with bank officials are organized to increase the farmer's awareness of different saving and loan schemes.

Other community development programmes:

Organizing women: With the initial help from SIDH, seventeen Mahila dals have come up in villages. Members of these dals hold monthly meetings to discuss village problems and organize themselves to address them. In three villages women have come together to repair the broken water pipes and have thus alleviated the problem of acute water shortage. In another village

persistent pressure from the Mahila dal led the government to sanction a sizeable amount of money for laying of fresh water pipelines.

Mahila dals have started a collective saving scheme. Each member contributes a fixed amount every month in the joint savings bank account for a predecided village facility for women such as a community toilet or a threshing machine. The success of Mahila dal saving schemes has motivated young boys and men to start a similar saving scheme.

BIDH also runs a sewing centre which has become fairly popular. Because of a lack of trainers, the programme shifts from one village to another after six months. A village that is keen to have the programme has to make a room available for this purpose and each trainee has to pay a nominal amount of Rs. 10/- towards the direct cost of training material. With the help of eight sewing machines, 30 women in three shifts of ten each can be trained during one course. Acquiring skills in tailoring helps women to stitch clothes for their family members and thus affect a substantial saving in household expenditure. Interestingly, a number of families already own a sewing machine donated under a government or Rotary club programme which can now be put to good use. It is proposed to identify some women with an innate talent for stitching who can be trained to stitch local

costumes in attractive designs. Such dresses can be sold to local tourists and can be displayed in selected boutiques in Delhi which may be interested in selling ethnic outfits.

A Mahila mela is held every year on 8th March (International Women's Day) where women bring baskets and articles made by them and participate in a folk dance competition. Mahila dals, schools and balwadis are used to create awareness among villagers about personal hygiene, clean surroundings, environment beautification, nutrition and balanced diet, and basics of good health.

Sanitation:

Bringing about a change in the personal habits of villagers is a difficult task. SIDH has not achieved any spectacular breakthroughs in this regard. Yet the organization has been trying, with modest success, to teach villagers the importance of modern toilets for disease prevention, soil enrichment and cleanliness of the surroundings. The programme provides guidance as well as partial financial and material support to villagers for building such toilets. So far 29 toilets have been constructed with the help of SIDH.

Vocational Training Centre: In order to use local talent for income generation purpose, SIDH is starting a vocational training centre where villagers will be provided training, design guidance in stitching, basket-making, toy-making, and knitting so that articles with local flavour and contemporary appeal can be sold

to tourists. If successful, this programme can become an important source of income to the village artisans. An outlet has been opened near Kempty falls, a major tourist spot near Mussoorie, where local costumes, toys and other handicraft items prepared by SIDH members are sold. Once the stitching activity gets streamlined, SIDH proposes to provide effective marketing support by establishing tie-ups with a few ethnic boutiques in Delhi. The final objective is to enable the vocational centre to develop into a full-fledged income-generation programme for the villagers.

Nursery: SIDH is trying to inculcate among farmers the practice of growing vegetables and fruits at least for their own consumption. This idea of using available land around their huts for the purpose of growing vegetable is completely alien to villagers and a lot of effort is to be made for them to adopt it. SIDH has started a vegetable nursery in one of the villages which is being maintained by the teachers and students of the Hamari Pathshala. A centre for selling vegetable seeds has been started at another village.

Efforts are being made to increase farmer awareness about the possibilities of growing cash crops. There are plans to acquire land to develop a permanent pilot farm. It is proposed to organize training programmes with the help of experts from agricultural universities and NGOs to teach simple farming techniques to villagers. SIDH is also trying to experiment with the Chakriya Vikas project which has been very successful in Bihar

and includes a phased multi-crop approach to agriculture. This experiment is in its nascent stage.

Appropriate technology: Present and Future: In its quest for appropriate technology to improve the quality of life of villagers SIDH has developed a corn sheller which cuts down the shelling time to 1/10th of the usual time. Maize is a major crop in this area, and shelling the hardened maize for grinding into corn flour is a hard process resulting often in blisters. The corn sheller which is sold at the cost price makes the process of shelling much swifter and easier.

Operating in the hilly and difficult terrain of Jaunpur, SIDH has found that inaccessability of villages, and long trekkings on uneven terrain before a road can be reached is a major barrier to the movement of people and goods in the mountains. This becomes particularly difficult and risky during rain and snow, but even on sunny days, a lot of time and energy is wasted in walking down or climbing up. To address this problem, SIDH is working on the design of a low-cost, manually-/animal-operated trolley system. The project is receiving technical support from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. If successful, trolleys can significantly improve the quality of life of villagers who can utilise the time saved from long and arduous walks in more productive ways. The project is still at conception stage.

Communication and Networking:

SIDH brings out a monthly newspaper Raibar (Message) in Hindi for villagers of Jaunpur. It serves as a mouthpiece of SIDH to communicate information of interest to local people such as different development schemes functioning in the block, opening of new bank branches, formation of Mahila dals, usefulness of afforestation, discussion of local problems, vegetables to be grown in a particular season, etc.

Since January 1992, Raibar has been converted into a magazine for the benefit of small voluntary organizations working in the hilly region. As such organizations face similar difficulties and challenges, Raibar intends to discuss issues common to such organizations. SIDH is developing a data base about NGOs, particularly the ones operating in its neighbourhood so that a network can be built among such organizations. In order to develop cooperation and understanding among field-based organizations, Raibar publishes addresses, and information about the area of operations and main activities of NGOs active in the Uttarakhand region. Also useful information about the well-established NGOs which can help the upcoming organizations is published. New NGOs are invited to share information about interesting activities and methods with Raibar so that it can be disseminated to others. In addition to providing a useful service to NGOs, this effort is also an invitation to other NGOs to

collaborate in this very important field where a lot can be achieved if organizations share their approaches, methods, experiments, innovation and difficulties with each other.

Workshop on supervision: An exercise in collaboration:

SIDH organized a three-day workshop in March 1992 to discuss different aspects of supervision and inputs for a general supervisory training programme. Participants represented diverse backgrounds such as management, training and field work. A number of field-based organizations participated enthusiastically in the workshop.

The workshop was organized in two stages. In stage one, SIDH held a one-day inhouse workshop with its field workers and supervisors. A brainstorm was held about the problems faced by supervisors, and possible approaches to solving them. Output generated by this workshop was used as an input for the subsequent workshop in stage two. The open sharing of the problems identified by SIDH supervisors in a wider forum in stage two was a bold step by SIDH and led to a lowering of guard by other participating organizations. As a result discussions proceeded in an atmosphere of sharing and learning in the three-day workshop.

Besides other tangible outcomes, developing a spirit of cooperation was a major gain from the workshop.

While creating a climate of openness among NGOs through such workshops, SIDH is also playing a useful role in evolving an agenda for substantive collaboration among field-based organizations in the Uttarakhand region in the future.

Major strengths:

In the course of the last three years SIDH has made considerable progress. From being a little-known, two-member organization groping in an unfamiliar terrain till recent past, it has come a long way to the present when its self-assurance matches the confidence reposed in SIDH by the local villagers and administrators, donor agencies and other field organizations. Following are the major indicators of the success of SIDH.

1. Acceptance among villagers. In the villages where SIDH is operating its programmes, it enjoys a high level of acceptance. SIDH members are viewed not as outsiders trying to impose their ideas but as 'our own people' and SIDH as 'our own samstha' by villagers. SIDH commands respect and the presence of SIDH is welcomed in villages. Factors responsible for high acceptance include:

- a. SIDH's reliance on village boys and girls to run their programmes. Thus SIDH's entry is regarded not as an intrusion but as a welcome presence with a set of useful activities involving villagers' own children. This involvement gives the young boys and girls an opportunity

to grow and contribute to the growth of others in their village.

b. The track record of SIDH. The schools run by SIDH act as models for villagers who start demanding similar commitment, regularity and rigour from teachers of government-run schools. The standards set by SIDH in work ethics and integrity have raised the expectations of villagers from government programmes also. SIDH's thus has been a positive influence.

c. The involvement of villagers. The village committees being set by SIDH to oversee and monitor the performance of SIDH schools and also in turn respond to the feedback given by the school to villagers about the attendance of children, and general cleanliness helps to develop in villagers a feeling of ownership of SIDH programmes. If the village committees continue to function smoothly and if SIDH can respond constructively to their feedback, a powerful process of two-way communication and mutual influence can be triggered which can further strengthen the relationship between SIDH and the villagers. Working towards social change can be easier in a climate of mutual trust.

d. SIDH's respect for the local culture. Members of SIDH have a positive regard for the tribal culture in the

Jaunpur block. The future projects of SIDH include a book on the rich traditions, including folklore, customs, festivals and fairs of tribals and another book on the status of women among tribals in the region. In the course of its preliminary surveys SIDH has already gathered interesting material about some unique customs and social practices prevalent among the tribals.

Approaching villagers in a spirit of positive inquiry rather than a condescending and patronising stance has been a helpful factor. SIDH is encouraging the villagers to participate actively in the cultural activities of the region. For example, SIDH managed to persuade the village boys and girls to take part in the annual youth festival held in Mussoorie in October 1991. As a result, for the first time a tribal team participated in the festival and left the residents and tourists of Mussoorie impressed with their performance. To the audience it was an exhilarating display of the rhythm and robustness of the tribal life; to the young boys and girls who danced with joyous abandon, it was an affirmation of their rich identity. To SIDH the event brought the twin satisfaction of exposing the residents of Mussoorie to the vibrancy of the tribal life at the outskirts of the city and, more importantly, the satisfaction of enabling the young tribal boys and girls to experience success and pride.

e. Sharing and empathy. The commitment of SIDH promoters to projects and people has blurred the distinction between their work and personal life. Work-related plans and concerns not only spill over into but dominate all their discussions. Not only are food and residential quarters willingly shared with SIDH members in the case of slightest need, but also personal belongings like jackets and pullovers are readily loaned to the village boys on the merest of pretexts. It is not so much the act of sharing personal possessions as the underlying concern and empathy which it signifies that makes the villagers develop a trust in SIDH.

2. Openness and self-reflection: An interesting feature of SIDH's work climate is a considerable degree of openness in the organization. That its teachers and supervisors are encouraged to share their viewpoints and opinions frankly is evident from the list of problems generated by them in a one-day inhouse workshop. A further evidence of SIDH's culture of openness is the act of sharing this list with participants from other organizations in a subsequent workshop.

The feedback received from the inhouse workshop on problems faced by supervisors has been used constructively to initiate a process of critical self-analysis. Learnings from the feedback are being incorporated into SIDH's future

plans of action which include a hard look at itself as an organization, and introduction of structural and management system-related changes which are considered desirable at the current phase of its growth. Organization analysis is expected to lead to adoption of relevant systems, methods and norms which may be consistent with and facilitate the achievement of objectives of SIDH in the future. Candid self-reflection, it is expected, will lead to further professionalisation of SIDH.

3. Change orientation: As an organization engaged in the business of introducing social change in villages, SIDH does not appear uncomfortable with the uncertainties associated with the prospects of changing itself. The organization, although a new arrival in the voluntary sector, is not overly cautious in its stance nor too dogmatic in its approach. In SIDH the opportunities to try out new ideas and innovations are welcomed. Supervisors and teachers are also encouraged to think in new ways and experiment with new methodologies and materials. Its resilience and openness to new ideas seems to be an important strength of SIDH. Organizing new activities, for example tribal dance in a public place by the village girls, has its own risks and can (and did) invite the wrath of the orthodox among the villagers. Or sharing with representatives of other NGOs the list of internal problems of SIDH runs the risk of exposure and ridicule if the purpose is misunderstood. But with the emotional security of its promoters arising probably from

their past successes, such risks and threats are ignored and the spirit of adventure continues.

4. **Credibility among administrators, funding agencies and other field organizations:** As a result partly of SIDH's acceptance by villagers, partly because of its apolitical and areligious nature, SIDH enjoys credibility among the local administrators, officials administering government programmes like the Mahila Samakhya as well as funding agencies such as Save the Child Fund (SCF) and other NGOs like Mobile Creches Delhi, Uttarakhand Sewa Nidhi Almora, and Laxmi Ashram Kausani. This is an important strength which SIDH can use to its advantage in seeking support for its future initiatives.

Problems and Difficulties

SIDH has faced a number of problems and has had its share of difficulties during its formative years. The important ones are presented below:

1. **Attitudinal problems:** SIDH is facing an uphill task in trying to change the attitudes and work ethics of villagers. In its formal and informal communications, SIDH keeps emphasising the value of effort (Karma) as against charity (Kripa). Yet villagers' previous exposure to government programmes and charity organizations such as missionaries has conditioned them to the role of passive recipients.

SIDH is trying hard to change this attitude and make villagers active participants in the process of development. It experiences reluctance among people to give up their earlier mental outlook but already some change is discernible among the youth.

2. Comparison with government jobs: SIDH supervisors and field workers often view government employees as their reference group. They keep comparing themselves with the government school teachers, village level workers and balwadi workers, who lead a life of relative comfort with a good salary and low accountability. The SIDH members on the other hand are expected to work much harder, observe work discipline, and work for a salary which compares poorly with government jobs. SIDH therefore faces occasional difficulty in motivating its workers to be more productive and devoted towards their work.
3. Lack of a second line of command. Like many other field organizations, SIDH faces the situation of a high level of commitment at the top which is not shared by others. A particularly serious problem is the absence of a strong second line. The result is often an excessive reliance of the organization on the top team not only for all decisions major or minor, but also for implementational details. This is often cited as a reason for a low level of delegation in

the organization. SIDH conducts supervisory development programmes as an effort to strengthen the middle link but it still has a long way to go.

4. **Inadequate human resources:** Because of its self-imposed constraint of hiring only local people SIDH finds its activities being severely constrained at times. At other times the organization feels the need for strong supervision so that field workers can receive appropriate support and guidance. Because supervisors work on SIDH projects in their own villages, they often find it difficult to be assertive and firm vis-a-vis the other villagers. In a small village community the carry over of personal relationships to work roles complicates the task of introducing changes. Although SIDH derives satisfaction from its efforts to develop the local human resources, the lack of right aptitude, exposure, and experience of field workers hinders the progress of many SIDH projects. As already mentioned, the sense of commitment found at the top is not visible to the same extent among the other members. To many school and balwadi teachers, the glitter of the city life becomes more attractive than an opportunity to educate their own people and improve the quality of life of their villages.

5. **Geographical constraints:** The topography of Jaunpur block poses a major problem for SIDH. The villages in the area are scattered and most are not accessible by road which makes supervision, coordination and monitoring of SIDH programmes difficult. The supervisor has to walk for a considerable time to reach most villages. Because of this physical constraint the outreach of a supervisor is restricted to two or three villages. To get the maximum mileage from his village visits, the same supervisor is made responsible for a number of activities in a village.

6. **Conflict between informal culture and the need for formalization :** With the growth in the size and activities of the organization, and an increase in the number of villages where it is active, the task of managing SIDH is becoming increasingly complex. At present it is felt that the informal style of management is no longer adequate, and that some formal systems need to be introduced. These are particularly needed for monitoring and evaluation. However, it is believed that the present informal, personalised style is also one of the strengths of the organization 'because in day-to-day interaction leaders are seen as role models by field workers, and leaders' commitment and enthusiasm is transmitted at least partly to others. The present challenge is to formalize some aspects of management while retaining the advantages of an informal culture.

Concluding Comments:

Having started with education as its main activity, SIDH today seems to be working on a multiple change agenda. Through its educational programmes it is working towards raising the awareness, knowledge and literacy level among children and adults. The vocational training project is directed towards enhancing skills of women so that it can grow into an income generation programme. In introducing these changes, SIDH is concerned about the quality of its change efforts. For example, in case of education, starting classes is not enough. SIDH is concerned about the quality of instruction, regularity and commitment of teachers, the relevance of contents, and the quality of instructional material. Concern about teachers' training, monitoring of their performance, patient development of creative and interesting workbooks, cassette, etc., are indicative of the value attached to these efforts. The accent is on creating a knowledge base and imparting skills.

For some other projects such as sanitation, nursery and communication, SIDH uses a facilitative approach. In this approach an awareness is created for better methods; new ideas are shared with people, ground rules such as personal stakes of villagers are indicated, and SIDH's back-up support (financial and material) is made available. It is then left to the villagers to take the initiative and seize the opportunity to experiment with and adopt the new practices advocated by SIDH.

SIDH thus appears to be using multiple change strategies for its multiple change agenda and as of now, the fit between agenda and strategies seems to be working out satisfactorily. Most of SIDH projects and programmes are addressed to women and children; and they have responded enthusiastically.

Social Change Organizations : Some Dilemmas

Our focus in the report so far has been SIDH as an upcoming field organization : its activities, methods, successes, limitations, etc. Before concluding this report it makes sense to move from specifics of a particular organization to raise issues which are relevant to all social change organizations. There are some basic questions which such organizations have to confront at some point of time. Conflict of values is one such area. A small experience of SIDH, though probably insignificant in itself, is used as an illustration here because it typifies the dilemmas faced by many field organizations.

There have been times when SIDH's concept of a desirable process or method has differed with villagers' perceptions and values. Balwadi is one area in which there has been a disagreement between SIDH's own values of what and how should small children learn, and the villagers' values and expectations. Although a minor matter, it is included here to highlight an important issue for field organizations.

The approach of SIDH is to involve children in a lot of fun activities like games, plays, dance and music, nature walks, etc., so that positive habits and attitudes can be developed and a healthy curiosity about environment can be aroused while the children enjoy themselves. Classroom teaching of alphabets takes a second priority. Villagers on the other hand emphasise the learning of three R's as of paramount importance even at the tender age of three or four years. There exists a conflict between SIDH's values and villagers' expectations. Sometimes the balwadi teachers have failed to understand and develop conviction in SIDH's approach and have had to leave. This exemplifies a crucial dilemma often experienced by social change organizations. The dilemma here is, as an agent of social change, should SIDH introduce its values and methods in a disapproving environment, hoping that after experiencing the merits of the method, the latter will change, or should it conform initially, work towards changing the attitudes of people and introduce new approaches only when people are ready?

What about the cost of each approach in terms of time and effectiveness? A related issue is : Who should decide what is appropriate and desirable? Should it be the social change organization which, no matter how committed, is still an outsider, and therefore alien to the system? Or should it be the intended beneficiaries who have a deep understanding of their realities but are often ignorant about change alternatives and their beneficial consequences? What if they are content with their lot and

do not want any change? Also, if a difference of values arises, is it really possible to say that one set of values and orientation (such as developmental values and long-term orientation) is indeed superior to another set of values and orientation (for example, economic values and short-term orientation)? On what parameters and from whose perspective can such comparisons and evaluations be made? The important question is: Should field organizations which are in the business of introducing change work towards changes that they consider desirable or should they respond only to the felt needs and specific requests of change targets? Or, should they first develop in people a sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo and create demand for change, and then step in to meet the demand? Many times choices need not be as clear and distinct as portrayed above. Additionally there may be forbidding constraints, uncertainties and pressures. The change targets can be a group characterized by heterogeneity of values and viewpoints; change agents themselves may have strong personal needs for achievement, self-fulfilment and recognition; the field organization may have deadlines imposed by funding agencies.

The questions raised above represent some of the many complex issues that field organizations face. It is not important to provide immediate answers and solutions. Often getting sensitized to these dilemmas enhances the capacity of an organization to deal with them more effectively. Asking such questions can increase the self-awareness of social change organizations and may influence their future agenda and strategies for change.

Such an exercise may have particular relevance for an upcoming organization like SIDH in that the organizational stance taken in dealing with such dilemmas can trigger important culture-building processes, and define organization's future relationship with its environment.