

The SMILE Programme of SAMVADA

-Its Background and Implementation-

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10 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

15 Till beginning of 1990, I was involved in the STUBE Programme (Development Education Programme for the Third World students) in Germany. Germany is a highly export oriented country which requires humanpower from the Third World countries educated in Germany and capable of functioning as "future ambassadors" to adapt and import German technology, know-how etc. The educational policy of the German universities is primarily oriented towards the needs of the industrialised countries. The foreign students have little opportunities to learn about the problems and issues of their countries and organise their studies accordingly. The intention of the STUBE (Development Education) programme was to create adequate learning opportunities for these students in areas relevant to their countries.

25 This programme started in 1979 as a pilot project for four years, initially offered some seminars on Third World issues and counselling. The response from the students was overwhelming right from the beginning enabling an expansion of the activities towards longer academies with practicals and exposures. The students would be sent to organisations involved in "alternative" areas (technology, energy, agriculture, medicine etc). By 1983 the response of the foreign students was so good that the funding agency had to convert the pilot project into a regular programme and support the extension of STUBE. In the next five years, six Regional STUBE centres were established in Germany responding to different educational needs of the foreign students in the respective geographical area. Different types of development education programmes emerged in course of time: seminars on development issues (theories of development, economical, technological, cultural or social issues), practicals at "alternative" institutions either in Germany or at home, exposures to various interesting institutions in Germany or at home, counselling, cultural activities etc.

45 Meanwhile, the STUBE programme is well consolidated and accepted by the government as well as funding agencies as an important programme to sensitise and involve the foreign students in development issues, in Germany or in other Third World countries. All the regional STUBE centres meet at least once in a year to coordinate their programmes and finances, exchange their

experience and discuss about STUBE policies. The regional centres are autonomous but function within the STUBE network. After the German 'Reunification', three more centres from the eastern part joined the STUBE network. The whole programme was initially supported by the Protestant Church's Development Agency. Meanwhile, the German Government, MISEREOR and Bread for the World also supported different programmes of STUBE.

When I came to India in August 1990, I had this STUBE experience. I was wondering if it would be possible to initiate a STUBE like programme in India where the college curriculum is equally inadequate and does not reflect the needs and realities in the society. How could students be motivated for social, ecological and gender issues? How can they be exposed to the lives of socially marginalised people in the cities and the rural areas? How can they be involved in their professional activities keeping these sections of the societies and issues in mind? How can a STUBE like programme be structured in India?...

When I came to Bangalore, I had a lot of questions in my mind, and was surprised one fine day to read a handbill informing about the SMILE programme in Bangalore. Anita, through this pamphlet informed about the SMILE objectives and invited students and NGOs to participate in the programme. A number of points she described here (objectives, need for the SMILE programme, planned activities, involvement of the students etc.) reminded me of my STUBE activities. I immediately contacted Anita. We understood each other very well from the beginning. Since I had another assignment at that time, I was cooperating with her whenever I was free and manage to participate in the SMILE programmes. Anita was well experienced in building up the SMILE programme as she had helped build the SMILE centres in Dehli, Ahmedabad, Bombay and Vizag. Later, in 1992, when SAMVADA was established, I was a trustee till I joined SAMVADA as staff. I need not build up STUBE like activities in India. Anita had done this wonderfully.

The SMILE programme is well established and has expanded, too.

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YOUTH AND STUDENTS

40 The Ministry of Human Resource Development classifies about a third of India's population (about 310 million) as youth, which is, defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "the period between childhood and full manhood or womanhood". In the Developmental Psychology and Sociology a number of efforts are made to define this period which varies, depending upon age, gender, caste, intra-
45 family relationship, economic status, access to school education or individual constitution etc. When and how does the phase of childhood end and the phase of full man- or womanhood begin? What are the criteria? Who defines them: society, community, family (the so-called "others") or the person himself or herself? Do the perceptions set by the "others" match with the self-perception
50 of the person of being a youth? There are many such factors which determine

the concept of youth. Age is one which gives a rough idea about it. Probably the period between the age of 12 and 25 can be called as youth though legally a person at the age of 18 or 21 is classified as an adult.

5 Though every individual goes through the period of youth, "youth" as a social category is historically a quite new phenomenon in India, relating primarily to the middle and upper class of the industrialised, organised sector of the economy. Schools and colleges are the institutions socialising and preparing the youth in order to 'function' in this sector of the domestic and global consumer market and the so-called 'main stream development' when they get out of the "youthhood". About 35 million (less than 12%) of the young people in India go for higher education. The majority ends up with secondary or primary school education or as 'drop-outs' or as 'illiterates' or as child labourers.

15 Formal schools and colleges are the protected institutions allowing the youth for 14 or more years "only to learn" (except those poor youngsters who are forced to earn while studying). There are practically no other responsibilities burdened on them. They are given a protected space, a kind of moratorium, to develop their personality and intellect and be fit for the future career in the competitive market and get "settled". Individualisation and self-centered orientation are the main methodical criteria as well as the objectives in this type of development.

25 Fortunately, this does not function as smoothly with the substantial section of the youth. Schools, colleges, corporate sector, government, parents, relatives give enough reasons for the youth to contradict, resist, rebel and make attempts to think of alternatives, but also to adjust and "go into oneself". Many of them cannot tolerate the burden of uncreative learning, pressures of the parents and neighbours and bolt themselves into a phantom of a successful doctor or engineer or educated housewife or government servant. The very protected space, the moratorium, created by the schools and colleges are the places of varieties of youth cultures, only marginally relating to the educational institutions or families. They develop their own niches (Yuppies, Individualists, Exorcists, Youth Wings, Youth Clubs...) where the families or the educational institutions have little influence and insights.

40 The youth grow up practically in two different worlds simultaneously. Since they are economically and culturally still highly dependent upon the families, the family influence weighs much more than the influence of the extra-familiar groups in the so-called niches. The socialisation of this youth is characterised by intense struggle within these two worlds to find the 'individual and independent' way. Some succeed in this struggle. However, in most of the cases the family wins. This trend is changing slowly in the 90s.

45 Whereas the youth of the 70s developed these niches based on the urge for "social responsibility, economic and political justice", today's youth seems to have a broader spectrum of agenda and involvement which can include the urge of the 70s, but also the urge for individualisation, personal careers and "making a lot of money as fast as possible". Today's school going youth hardly grow in any closed ideological, religious or social (joint families or community) setup with more or less defined relationships to the authorities and a catalogue

of responsibilities. The youth is extensively exposed to mass media, mass consumption, physical mobility, peer group relations etc. so that families and schools as the classical socialising institutions have no more the monopoly of socialisation. The youth can relate substantially to the values, ideas and personalities outside these institutions which thus lose gradually their social authority. These youth relate more and more to the 'universal, heterogeneous offers' for socialisation and react in a different way than the earlier generations of youth.

But the major sections of the Indian society have not been caught by the 'organised sector'; they survive in the 'informal sector'. They are born in poverty, born in the lower caste or born as women. They are not sent to a kindergarten or to a school, or they have to drop out for many reasons. About 85 million of such children live without being 'youth'. They "jump" from a more or less childhood at home or on the streets or fields into the phase of adulthood. They work fulltime, on the fields, at home, on the streets, in the hotels, shops or factories, earn money, look after themselves, their younger sisters and brothers, and contribute to the survival of the family. They have not the privilege of being "youth" with all the support of the institutions like schools, colleges or youth clubs, highly subsidised by the State. They cannot 'enjoy the moratorium' and prepare themselves in 10, 12 or 14 years to build up their future profession and career. They are ultimately school drop-outs, casual or unskilled labourers and self-sustaining. Only a few of them get or take vocational training. Most of them live "informal" life in the "informal sector" and die informally.

Unlike in the Western and South-Eastern countries where literacy is between 85 and 95%, where practically every child goes through the organised institutions like kindergarten, school, college, or university, the situation in the Third World, including India, is different. Only a few have the privilege but also the burden to go through these institutions. Moreover, only a few of these institutions, mostly the expensive public schools and convent colleges, offer pedagogically good learning programmes and atmosphere. In most of the schools and colleges the teaching and learning is syllabus oriented, repetitive and not reflective.

If we compare the urban and rural learning opportunities for the youth in India, we can observe similar striking and blatant differences. The educational institutions, the required infrastructure, good and sufficient educational materials, qualified teachers, free access to education for girls etc. are totally different in the cities and rural areas. The resources are primarily concentrated in the cities. The rural schools and colleges are poorly equipped in every sense and neglected at all times.

To summaries this:

- The traditional societies where learning took place as initiation and practical experience within the family and community, has been practically replaced by curriculum learning through the schools, or "on the job learning" for the child labourers. Being a youth today means primarily school or college youth or drop-out and child or youth labour without or with very little formal education. The youth is exposed more and more to information and

5 contacts outside the family, resulting in reducing the family influence gradually, though the overall family position is still strong particularly due to financial dependence upon the elder family members. National and international television, videos, including blue movies, play much more important role than earlier in forming the personal and social values of the youth and accumulating the amount of information.

10 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SMILE PROGRAMME

15 We are also confronted with two categories of youngsters in India:

1. Youth (girls and boys) who can go to school, college or university, plan the career, develop the intellectual capacities and participate actively in the societal issues. Majority of them are in the cities.
2. Youngsters who can take only partially or not at all the 'protection' of the above institutions (school, college, university), work as children in the informal sector in order to survive and function practically as adult. They do not have the space as youth. Majority of them live in the rural areas. Girls are worst affected and ignored.

25 SMILE Programme has comparatively less contact with the youngsters of the second category. The programme relates primarily to the youth of the first category. There are number of students who are interested in social, ecological, political or gender issues and who would like to get involved directly besides organising the studies.

35 The Indian society is polarised in 'haves' (minority) and 'have-nots' (majority). The social and ecological problems are tremendous. The social conflicts are often violent and the environmental destruction and pollution, particularly in the cities, have reached alarming scale. Child labour, bonded labour, brutal exploitation and oppression of a substantial section of the society, polluted water and air, water scarcity, massive urbanisation and motorisation, building boom and slums... these are the daily issues and very much visible. Social conflicts for power holding or empowerment, control over the resources, struggle of the marginalised sections of the society to survive for the life in dignity... characterise the public life in India. The youth grow up in this milieu. Some of them cannot adjust and accept this; they want to change this positively, want to look for humanist and appropriate solutions. But the rigid college curriculum and the authoritarian learning methods practically make it impossible for them to relate to these issues. Only a few families have the culture to sit with the children, discuss and respect their views even if they do not match with the views of the parents, and encourage them to study the societal issues besides the college studies and understand this as a important factor in intellectual and personal development of the children.

SMILE Programme wants to offer these youth an opportunity to understand the social and ecological problems in the society through practical experience, exposures, workshops or projects, to encourage them to get involved in these issues and thus compliment the formal education in the college by experiential learning through the SMILE Programme. The programme operates with the assumption that this experiential learning of the societal realities in the villages, cities or adivasi hamlets motivate the students to actively involve in organising positive changes in the society, later in their life when they work somewhere. SMILE Programme does not intend to convert the youth into social workers or recruit them for the NGOs. This could be only one of the numerous possibilities to engage oneself in the society. We think, that every person has in her/his private and professional life as doctor or engineer, houseman or housewife, government employee or teacher, artist or maali... ample opportunities to exercise social responsibility towards people and environment.

The SMILE Programme started in 1986 in Dehli [1#] initially for the urban students with the aim to deepen their awareness of themselves and the society in which they live, to experience the day to day struggles of the rural and urban poor, women, tribals, child workers, fishermen, dalits, unorganised labour and other marginalised sections of the society, to learn from the efforts of People's Movements, Trade Unions, Non-Governmental Organisations and individuals who are working with these forgotten sections of people and challenging present structures through alternative approaches to development. The students were invited to spend 6-8 weeks of their vacations with different NGOs in India to understand their work and the problems of the people they work with. These exposures constituted the central programme of SMILE in the initial phase.

In the beginning the students were sent for exposures to the NGOs and villages without much orientation and preparations. For many of them, it was a totally new and strange experience to stay in a village and understand the way of organising the life by the villagers. At the end of these exposures, the students prepared painstakingly detailed reports. These report revealed that only a few among them really understood the problems of the people they lived with during their exposures. Moreover, very few of these students got involved in the issues and struggles which they witnessed. The impact of the visit on the individual students in terms of their attitudes and values was disappointing.

After this setback, the whole orientation and methodology of SMILE underwent a drastic change. It was realised that just one exposure does not really help a student to grasp the forces operating in the society. A three-tiered exposure programme was evolved so that each student would be given three exposures spread over a period of two years with a lot of discussion and debate during the time interval between exposures.

The initial exposure would consist of a long stay in a village / micro situation where an NGO is active and the learning would take place through interactions with the local people. The second exposure would entail short visits to 3 or 4 NGOs to compare notes on various approaches to issues. The third exposure

1[#]See: Anita Ganesh: Looking Back With SMILE, KHOJ Nr.1, Dec.1992

would be geared towards taking up a responsibility within an NGO and completing it within a period of 2-3 months. It would also involve constant reflections on the future course of action.

5 To help rural youth and students, to analyse their local situation and take up issues, a rural SMILE programme was started in 1987. This was done through NGOs working in rural areas. The organisations identified a group of 10 to 15 youth in the area. SMILE then provided funds and made arrangements for these young people to be sent on exposures and to be trained in organising skills.

10 The programme gradually became popular and a number of such groups were provided aid. The three-tiered Urban SMILE programme gradually encompassed other colleges in Dehli and attracted students from a variety of academic disciplines. It was a very rewarding year with many new ideas and challenges. Students were given a thorough orientation before they left for their exposures, and reflection meetings were held on their return. A lot of attention was paid to the selection of students to get more sensitive SMILE participants.

15 1987 a Fellowship programme was introduced to help motivated students to enter the development sector and support them for a period of three years if they decided to work for an NGO or initiated some creative development work on their own.

20 Around this time People to People Exposures could also be started. Many people's leaders or representatives seldom get an opportunity to visit other organisations and discuss common issues. This exposure programme could widen their perspectives and activities, also.

25 By mid 1988 SMILE programme was known to many students and NGOs in India. More and more students and NGOs from outside Dehli expressed their desire to participate in the Student's or People to People Exposure programmes. It was not satisfactory to organise the exposures for the outsiders from Dehli. Selection of the candidates, intensive orientation before and sharing-meetings after the exposures, personal counselling etc. could not be carried out intensively if the students could not come regularly which was difficult for those who came from distant cities. It was equally difficult to satisfy the different needs of the NGOs from remote places in India. It was not easy to maintain intensive communication with the distant NGOs in order to organise the People to People Exposures from Dehli and do justice to the needs of the students and NGOs. Thus it was decided to extend the SMILE programme to Ahmedabad through Jan Vikas, to Bombay through YUVA, to Vishakhapatnam through LAYA. In Bangalore, Anita Ganesh was given the responsibility to build up the SMILE center.

30 35 40 45 All the four new SMILE centres became functional in 1989 and started their own urban and rural SMILE programmes for students, adivasi or dalit youth. The good part of this expansion was that each center grew independently and differently, and could stress on those activities which were appropriate to the local situation. Since YUVA, JAN VIKAS and LAYA had earlier their own programmes before they included the SMILE in their repertoire, they gave this new inclusion a separate identity. YUVA named the SMILE programme "ANUBAHV SHIKSHA",

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JAN VIKAS called it "ECUIP" (Exposure CUM Internship Programme) and LAYA as "PARICHAY". Only SMILE Bangalore continued with the traditional identification and established the organisation SAMVADA to conduct solely the SMILE programme for the southern States.

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These five centers have been working since then independently. Once a year the staff of all centers meet, discuss common issues, exchange experience and conduct a thematic workshop. The coordinators may meet to discuss the common policy, budget and other matters. The programme is financed by MISEREOR. Each center can organise supplementary funding if needed.

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The programme components of SMILE are developed differently in every center. The urban and rural SMILE programmes by and large consist of following areas:

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- * Development education in the colleges and with the youth groups (Yuvak Sanghas)
- * Exposures with orientations and experience sharing
- * Workshops / Training on weekends and in vacations
- * Project studies and Project activities
- * Student's magazine and library
- * Youth exchange programmes

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Meanwhile, the five SMILE centers are established with their own strengths and weaknesses, ups and downs and limited to geographical area around them. They still cannot reach the students and youth in other States. Thus mid 1994, it was decided in the SMILE annual meeting to extend the SMILE programme through 25 new centers in India in the next five years. The decision process to constitute SMILE Outreach, its structure, finances, responsibilities of the existing centers, monitoring etc. was difficult. SAMVADA has the responsibility to initiate three centers in the South (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, North Karnataka). We could identify Mini in Tamil Nadu and Sharada Gopal in North Karnataka, women who had been working with students and youth and agreed to build up SMILE centers in their respective areas. They started with their work, initially as SMILE fellows. Meanwhile, they get their share of funds through SAMVADA and are semi-independent and no more fellows. As soon as the new budget is sanctioned, they will go independent of SAMVADA to get the funds through IGSSS and work as sovereign partner in the SMILE network. Equally, other centers are coming up (West Gujarat, Rajasthan, East Maharashtra, North-East Region, North and South Andhra Pradesh, Orissa...).

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This SMILE network is quite unique in the development work within the NGOs in India. Every center is on one hand independent. But on the other hand, they have common policy decisions, budget and programme framework. IGSSS as the fund channelising agency is part of this network and has equal position. A Core group along with a co-ordinator has been formed for the implementation of SMILE Outreach in which a person represents her/his organisation. All the centers would constitute the general body.

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SMILE PROGRAMME OF SAMVADA

5 In 1989, Anita started with the SMILE activities in Bangalore after she initiated
the SMILE centers in Dehli, Ahmedabad, Bombay and Vizag along with Dominic
and others. Initially she started working from her house, contacted couple of
10 colleges in Bangalore, informed the principals, teachers and students about the
objectives and activities of the SMILE programme and built up gradually
rapport with a few of them. In the beginning, many of them rejected, some
reacted skeptically, some were curious. Only a few encouraged and supported.
She met the students in the canteens or outside the college and invited them
home. She had long discussions with them which helped to build up confidence
and trust. With a poster and a brochure, she informed the students, colleges
15 and the NGOs about the SMILE programme.

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Her approach in the initial phase was socially oriented: She wanted the students to take sides for the poor and marginalised in the society, understand their life and their struggle for survival, fight against the massive inequality and oppression in the society. She appealed to the students to be aware of their privileges and responsibilities and to actively involve combating the injustice. Students were moreover asked to critically reflect over the concept of development and personal values.

The best way to get into these learning processes was to get confronted directly with the lives of these people, live with them, listen to their life experience, understand their survival strategies and then get involved for their cause. These exposures would give the students insights and help them to form their political opinion and orientation for actions. Thus the exposure idea became the central part of the SMILE in this phase. *"Many of us who are privileged to have a good education, consider ourselves to be well informed about our country's progress and its problems. But are we really aware... ??? The story of India is the story of babies who die for want of food, of malnourished mothers who travel miles for water and fuel, of illiterate young girls with no future and bonded men and women who cannot get a morsel of food even once a day... It is also the story of lopsided development efforts that have led to a few islands of prosperity in the midst of the appalling poverty and of massive inequalities in consumption, income and ownership. In most cases we are unaware of this reality as we live detached from it. Even if we do realise that all this is taking place, it is usually a conceptual understanding which lacks a human face. There is a lot one can discover about our country and its problems, if one is open to the realities around us... SMILE provides an opportunity for those students who are interested to learn from the poor and from groups who are working with them"* (Anita Ganesh: A Letter from SMILE, 1989).

Months passed before she could win trust of some students and teachers to take time to discuss with her issues of development, poverty, social disparity, situation of women etc. It took some more time before she was given classes to introduce the SMILE idea in the colleges. Only a few students met her regularly. In the first year she could send three girl students of National Law School for exposure to the NGOs in Gujarat (Kutch) and Rajasthan (Thilonia). This was a great success. The students were strongly impressed by the experience and the stay with poor villagers, their professional capacities, struggle to organise themselves, fight against injustice, and their warmth and friendliness. The was totally strange and exciting for them. When they returned, they prepared their reports, narrated their experience to other students and raised curiosity among them. The ice was broken and the contact to others students developed faster. Not all could be sent for exposures. They were invited for discussions, workshops, orientations and experience sharing.

At the end of the first year, a foundation was laid for the four working areas of SMILE Bangalore which are relevant till today:

Sessions in the colleges, Exposures, Discussions / workshops and Exposure Reports. In the following years, these areas were further developed to incorporate many new subjects and to use different learning methods. Gradually SMILE was known to many students in Bangalore. It became much easier to take sessions in the colleges on child labour, gender issues, human rights, environmental pollution or development. There were teachers who were interested in these issues and wanted their students to know about them since the regular syllabus does not offer these subjects.

But a session of an hour was too short to discuss a complex theme like child labour. It became necessary to organise thematic seminars for a day or two in order to have meaningful and intensive discussions for which even experts could be invited as resource persons. The orientations of 4-5 days enabled to cover even much broader areas of subjects. Right from the beginning it was mandatory that the students write down their exposure experience soon after they return back. The reports were not expected to describe the student's activities but to analyse the situation of the people, their problems and their struggle as perceived by the students. The very personal feelings and understanding were much more important than the chronology of activities. The collection of these reports has resulted into publishing them in the student's magazine SHODHANE.

In 1991 Urban SMILE activities consolidated in Bangalore so that variety of programmes could be offered regularly to the students. The need was then felt to build up the Rural SMILE. Lucy who had experience in training of rural activists joined SMILE. She could quickly build up contacts with the rural colleges of Doddaballapur and YNHoskotte. The access to the rural students was rather easy. The learning opportunities are very much restricted in the rural areas. Thus, every interesting input is welcome by them. Their reaction to the SMILE programme is much more direct than that of urban students. They are acquainted with the social and economical issues through experience since most of the students were dalits. They may not be so articulate but they are curious since they do not have access to good and comprehensive information. In this situation, Lucy could build up the Rural SMILE by conducting sessions in the colleges, organising discussions in the villages or in Bangalore, sending the students for exposures... There was intensive contact with these students in the early phase. Their reports in Kannada were published in SHODHANE. The rural students made enthusiastic use of these little opportunities offered to them. Their identification with issues discussed in SMILE was strong. Soon the Doddaballapur students formed their own Sangha, Chintane, in order to discuss the local issues among the youth.

Towards 1991 end, SMILE had thus two women, Anita and Lucy, and two sections: Urban SMILE and Rural SMILE. The activities grew quite fast and could not be coordinated from Anita's house anymore. The pressure mounted slowly to institutionalise SMILE. Early 1992, SAMVADA was established as a trust with some conditions, i.e. no accumulation of immovable property, students participation, no relatives working in the organisation etc. Additional funds to set up the appropriate office were given by Bread for the World. Gradually, students accepted SAMVADA and made it as a meeting point.

By middle of 1993 SAMVADA had contacts with 24 colleges in and around Bangalore. Its original character has been preserved by and large till today. Sessions in the colleges, counseling in the colleges or at SAMVADA, thematic workshops on weekends or holidays, Chili Pili discussions on Saturdays, Orientations twice a year, exposures etc.

The fellowship programme also grew in course of time. A number of young people of different disciplines and involvement were supported. Most of them have remained in the development area after their fellowships. Some have established independent organisations, some have joined NGOs. The contact with the fellows is intensive. The fellows submit regularly the progress report and have consultative meetings with the SAMVADA members. Amongst the present fellows, Sharada and Mini have taken the responsibility of establishing independent SMILE centers in Dharwad and Madras respectively. Gururaj is establishing a Paper Forum ("Kagada Katta") to propagate 'ECO-Friendly paper'. Chitrashekhar is a rural fellow working on floriculture issue which is becoming quite serious in the rural areas of Bangalore. Many farmers in Chitrashekhar's village and in the surrounding have experienced pressure from the floriculture lobby which requires them to produce flowers for the export. It has been influencing the agricultural and social practices in those areas. Another fellow, Basavaraj, is involved in organising the anganwadi workers in Karnataka. Though these women are the key persons in educating and caring for the anganwadi children and thus having sincere responsibilities in the society, government is not giving proper attention to their social securities and training.

This short description of SAMVADA's activities indicates that the organisation has meanwhile established its base firmly and runs the programme more or less as a matter of routine. Whereas in the early phase of SAMVADA the approach was rather social oriented, it has widened the approach in the last four years, giving more attention to the ecological and gender issues as well. Also the methodology has changed to some extent by involving the students in projects e.g. 'Sexual Abuse', 'Pawn Brokers' or 'Greening Houses', exposure courses etc. In the early phase, the college sessions had important space in the programme for sensitising the students for the social issues and informing them about SAMVADA's activities. In the last few years this has reduced, both in urban as well as rural colleges. It has not affected the urban programme because SAMVADA is meanwhile known amongst urban students who regularly come to SAMVADA and introduce the organisation to other new students in their own way. But for the rural programme, it has negative consequences. College sessions play in the rural areas much more important role in collectively encouraging the students to involve in social or environmental issues. Urban students are much more individualised than the rural students who have stronger social ties.

Major part of SAMVADA's activities are still concentrated on the English speaking urban programme at Bangalore. The programmes for the rural and Kannada speaking urban students have received comparatively less attention for many reasons. On long term, this should change radically. The rural and corporation college students, particularly the poor, have comparatively less opportunities for learning, acquiring broad knowledge, making new experience, getting intellectual or social exposure etc. Majority of the educational

institutions in the rural areas are poorly funded and maintained. The situation of the young girls is extremely bad. SAMVADA can play a vital role here since even in these poorly maintained educational institutions there are many genuine students who are hard working and contributing towards the family income besides managing their studies. There is a need to build up a strong rural SMILE programme with independent activities in one or two rural areas: Regular college sessions in 4-5 colleges, 4-5 thematic workshops, chili pili discussions, exposure programme, rural fellowships, film shows, library etc. SAMVADA can influence to some extent the educational institutions in the rural areas if some consistency is ensured for a specific period. Moreover, the Bangalore programme can also get a strong wing with specific programme activities for the corporation college students of Bangalore.

SAMVADA's educational approach as well as the activities are broad and interesting. It is quite exciting to work at SAMVADA and be confronted with different types of people and ideas, young and old. There is a lot to do in SAMVADA.

It is a wonderful learning and working experience at SAMVADA !