



Mukul Madhav Foundation Report from June to September 2025

Organizational Background:

Inspired by the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, and equipped by their medical training in India, and subsequently, training in public health and research at the Johns Hopkins University, the doctor couple Abhay and Rani Bang, founded 'SEARCH' in 1986. SEARCH is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) working in the poorest, semi-tribal district, Gadchiroli, in the state of Maharashtra, (India), 1000 km away from Mumbai.

SEARCH runs several health programs such as providing medical care through a hospital for the tribal and rural people of Gadchiroli, community health care in 269 villages, reproductive health education for youth and women, prevention and deaddiction of alcohol and tobacco, participatory program for tribal development, training of trainers from different part of country and abroad, field research to improve rural health services and advocacy to influence policy. Over the past 39 years, SEARCH has been able to make some important breakthrough in the public health problems of India and globally.

The Quarters of SEARCH called 'Shodh-gram' is located in the forest 17 km from the nearest town of Gadchiroli. It is spread over 47 acres of land. This campus, reminding of an Ashram and a tribal village, has more than 70 buildings, including a hospital, research center, training center, training hostel, mess, and residential facilities for 150 staff and family members.

Vision: SEARCH's vision is 'Aarogya-Swaraj', which means 'People's Health in People's hands, by empowering individuals and communities to take charge of their health and thereby help them achieve freedom from disease as well as dependence

Mission: The mission of SEARCH is service, training, empowerment and research in the health of the communities as expressed in its name (Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health)

About the Program:

1. Sexual & Reproductive Health Education for Youth, Adolescents and Women (SRHEYA):

The program for sexual and reproductive health for youth, adolescents and women is being conducted by SEARCH since 1995. SEARCH had developed a detailed module called SRHEYA (Sexual and Reproductive Health Education for Youth and Adolescent) OR 'Tarunya – Man – Bhan' (TMB) in Marathi, delivered through camps (1, 2 & 3 days) as well as Digital Sessions. This SRHEYA module (Annex 1 for the contents of the module) is extremely popular in Gadchiroli as well as across Maharashtra. The Digital SRHEYA has been viewed by more than 10 million viewers. The training methods used are varied and found to be consistently effective, when measured rigorously, demonstrating a definite increase in the knowledge level was observed both during camps. The use of vernacular language (Marathi) in SRHEYA model without compromising on the scientific integrity and content contributes significantly to the



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effectiveness of the program. Due to its extensive work in the tribal villages, SEARCH has ensured that this model is also rooted in the culture and ethos of the tribal.

SRHEYA mainly addresses the following issues:

- Maharashtra has nearly 20 million adolescents and youth. There are approximately 10 million pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers throughout India at any given time.
- There is lack of systematic efforts and programs to deliver scientific information in a culturally appropriate context in the state of Maharashtra. Similarly, there is lack of proven programs which can be scaled up to reach a greater number of youths. Lack of scientific information on sexual and reproductive health with the youth and adolescents is a major health constraint leading to unhealthy behavior and associated physical, psychological, and social morbidities. These include social and physiological issues such as:
 - Unmarried motherhood,
 - Reproductive health problems such as related to menstruation, and gynecological diseases
 - Misconceptions of friendship, infatuation, love and relationships
 - Sexual abuse and violence as well as
 - STIs / STDs.

SRHEYA addresses the lack of channel of availability of scientific information as well as tries to mitigate the associated resultant morbidities.

2. Project Goal:

Imparting sexual and reproductive health education to youth and adolescents (SRHEYA) & women in Gadchiroli & Maharashtra to increase awareness about sexual health and to bring appropriate changes in their behaviour resulting in better health of youth, adolescents & women; and to prepare training module to enable SRHEYA through the use of social media, reaching youth all over Maharashtra; as well as to promote sports for healthy lifestyle and community leadership amongst the tribal youth of Gadchiroli.

2.1 Sub-Goals:

- i. Providing Sexual and Reproductive Health Education to Youth and Adolescents (SRHEYA) in Maharashtra
- ii. Scaling up SRHEYA in all Tribal Ashram schools of Gadchiroli district
- iii. Scaling up in the Maharashtra state through Distance learning module
- iv. Dissemination and imparting of SRHEYA on large scale through digital methods & social media.
- v. Conducting Women's Reproductive Health Program to raise awareness about reproductive rights and choices as well as promote and improve women's reproductive health.
- vi. Integrating SRHEYA with the sports activities of youth in tribal Gadchiroli.

3. Project Period:

This project is active from June 2025 to March 2026, with a quarterly reporting schedule.



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4. Quarterly Program Output Indicators:

Sl. No	Output Indicators	Target for 10 Months (June 25 – March 26)	Target Achieved (June to Sept 2025)	Achievement for April – May 2025
1	The number of colleges in Gadchiroli and Maharashtra that imparted SRHEYA to youth.	3000	1360	260
2	Number of formal partnerships formed with educational institutes/ colleges, universities	10	4	
3	Number of tribal adolescents from Tribal Ashram schools from Gadchiroli district imparted SRHEYA	2000	1552	
4	Select tribal youths (Sports group formed) from 230 tribal villages of the Dhanora Block of Gadchiroli district imparted SRHEYA	175	152	
5	Student Ambassadors of Tarunya-Man-Bhan were developed to disseminate Tarunya-Man-Bhan	200	162	
6	Increase the viewership and subscribers of the Digital Tarunya-Man-Bhan YouTube channel	200000	12315	4372
7	New digital sessions on sexual and reproductive health developed & disseminated through the YouTube channel of Tarunya-Man-Bhan	17	20 sessions Ready to upload on you tube channel	2
8	Tribal & rural women from Self Help Group (SHGs) from 230 villages of Dhanora Block of Gadchiroli district imparted SRHEYA	1250	901	26 women & 9 SHGs
9	Admitted women patients in the Hospital of SEARCH imparted relevant SRHEYA Sessions in group	334	187	



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10	Developed and printed a detailed Process Documentation of SRHEYA and disseminating to relevant organizations	NA	NA	
11	Developed and printed a detailed training manual for imparting SRHEYA using the Digital Tools and disseminating to relevant organizations	NA	NA	
12	Developed and printed a detailed FAQ handbook for imparting SRHEYA to accompany the training manual and disseminated.	NA	Discussed with the Communication team	
13	Wrote and published articles in Marathi newspapers on Tarunya-Man-Bhan	NA	NA	
14	Wrote and published case studies in appropriate journals on different components of Tarunya-Man-Bhan, namely, Program with Youth, Program in Tribal Ashram Schools, Safe Tribal Ashram Schools for Girls, Program with Women as well as Sports and tribal youth.	01	Discussed with the Communication team	
15	Disseminated information in person about Tarunya-Man-Bhan to visitors (individuals and groups) visiting SEARCH	NA	104	
16	Capacity building sessions (exposure visits, distance learning courses, workshops) attended by the Tarunya-Man-Bhan team.	05	2	

Ambuja foundation, Gondwana University, Agriculture college, Tribal project office

*1. Capacity Building activities:

Team members attended two capacity-building workshops aimed at enhancing their professional skills. The first was a **BCC (Behaviour Change Communication) workshop** facilitated by **Mr. Ashok Bhargava**, which focused on effective communication strategies and message design for community engagement. The second was a **Science Writing Workshop** conducted by **Prof. Rajanikant**, providing participants with practical insights into writing



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scientific content clearly and effectively. Both sessions contributed significantly to strengthening the team's communication and technical writing abilities.

2. Exposure visit: NA

5. Learnings and Challenges: There are a lot of learnings that occur through the challenges we face in the field. Some of these are shared here below:

5.1 Learnings

- The team observed that students in Ashram schools often tend to be shy and reserved. To encourage participation, the team began introducing sessions in the local Gondi language through songs and interactive activities before starting discussions on Tarunyabhan. This approach helped build rapport and made students more open and engaged. The experience reinforced the importance of culturally and linguistically appropriate communication in ensuring better participation and understanding.
- The team also learned that practical and relatable approaches to self-protection resonate strongly with adolescent girls. Based on participant feedback, the team incorporated a session on identifying and responding to *uncomfortable situations*. This addition created a safe space for girls to share their thoughts and feelings, helping them feel heard and supported. The experience emphasized the need to make sessions more experiential and emotionally supportive.

5.2 Challenges

- **Difficulty in measuring change:** Tracking actual shifts in students' attitudes and behavior related to sexuality remained challenging, as these changes are gradual and not easily measurable.
- **Trainer hesitation:** Some trainers initially felt hesitant and less confident while conducting sessions on sensitive topics, which affected the depth of early discussions.
- **Digital exposure and misinformation:** The widespread use of mobile phones among adolescents led to easy access to misinformation, inappropriate online content, and excessive screen time. This influenced students' understanding of sexuality and affected their attention and engagement during sessions.

1. Testimonial:

बि.ए. दुस-या वर्षाला शिकत असणारी मुलगी म्हणाली कि, तुमचे शिबीर झाल्यानंतर मी स्वतःला प्रामाणिक पणे विचारायला लागली माझे मुलावर असणारे प्रेम हे माझ्याकडून जरी खरे होते तरी त्या मुलांना माझ्या सोबत लैंगिक संबंध ठेवला व माझे व्हिडिओ तयार केले आता तो मला ब्लॉकमेल करायला लागला. शिबीर दरम्यान तीचे काउंसिलिंग करून तीला सर्व कायदेशिर बाजू समजून सांगितली आता तीला आत्मविश्वास निर्माण झाला व त्या धक्क्यातून ती बाहेर आली.

A girl in her second year of B.A. stated that after your camp, she began an honest self-assessment. She realized that while her love for the boy was genuine and true, he had taken advantage of her, engaging in sexual relations and creating videos of her. Now, he was blackmailing her.



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During the camp, she received counselling and was thoroughly informed about all her legal options. As a result, she regained her self-confidence and has now recovered from the traumatic shock.

7. Photos from the field:



Tarunyabhan training at Government Tribal Ashram Shaala, Pendri village Dhanora Taluka.

Date of the camp: July 30, 2025.

Total no. of students in attendance: 247 (113 males & 134 females)

Other attendees: 3 Teachers & 1 hostel superintendents

The session covered modules on pubertal changes in the male and female reproductive systems and their functions, including menstruation, reproduction, and issues related to irresponsible sexual behavior, STIs, and HIV/AIDS. Additionally, Sunanda Khorgade and Rajendra Isasare conducted a session on the harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol consumption.

Mode of instruction: The content was delivered through a combination of PPT presentations, videos, and lectures.



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Tarunyabhan Training was conducted at the Government Tribal Ashram Shaala, Yengalkheda Village, Kurkheda Taluka.

Date of the camp: September 17, 2025

Total number of students in attendance: 223 (86 males & 137 females)

Other attendees: 3 teachers and 1 hostel superintendent

The session included modules on pubertal changes in the male and female reproductive systems and their functions, covering topics such as menstruation, reproduction, irresponsible sexual behaviour, STIs, and HIV/AIDS. Additionally, Sunanda Khorgade and Rajendra Isasare conducted a session on the harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol consumption.

Mode of instruction: The training was delivered through a combination of PPT presentations, videos, and lectures.