



# SAMVEDNA

## ANNUAL REPORT

2018-19

**S a m v e d n a** works to combat caste-based commercial sexual exploitation and human sex trafficking specifically in the Bedia community. The organization has a two-pronged approach – working with the victims for their rehabilitation and reintegration, and prioritize prevention for the vulnerable members of the community through advocacy.

We emphasize on education of Bedia children and community development to challenge and change patriarchal mind-set.

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# CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Dear friends,

Year-end is an unusually busy time for us. Not only because we're wrapping-up our activities and preparing to relaunch ourselves with renewed energy, but also because it's a time of introspection and reflection. It is with this spirit that we prepare our annual reports; a sense of sheer wonderment sweeps over us as we take stock of the hard work we've put in through the year, and the milestones we've achieved.

My team, the pillars of Samvedna has ensured that I stand tall and that I can talk about our work with pride. It is their unwavering spirit and unflinching dedication that makes sure that we're always moving forward. I would like to take this moment to appreciate their work and their commitment to Samvedna and to each other. I would also like to thank our board members, and our donors for their guidance, kindness and all the support that comes from them at the times when we need them the most.

The steps that we've walked may seem small, but we walk with hundreds of people whose lives we've touched with our work – our small steps are long strides towards a future of possibilities.

The challenges that we face are complicated, and constantly evolving – we are faced with unprecedented developments in our field of work daily, but we ensure that we keep pace and work on ourselves.

It is thus, with this spirit of rejuvenation, growth and vitality that we enter the year to take-on bigger challenges, make better choices and take better decisions, and move closer to the world we've envisioned together.

Best wishes,

Trupti Jhaveri

Chairperson, Samvedna



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# HIGHLIGHTS

2 new children's groups

3 children received a sports scholarship at the Junior Badminton Championship

10 school drop-out children reconnected to education system

20 villages now connected with Samvedna

40 new students in Bhopal city

51 children in TIE 2018

374 children getting direct education aid through Pankh classes

582 Bedia families

1232 Bedia children







# PROGRAMS IN VILLAGES

## PAHAL

134 boys and 156 girls are now a part of the formal education system.

10 school drop-out children reconnected to the education system through Madhya Pradesh Open School

“Pahal” is our very first step towards ensuring a bright future for all children associated with us. The program brings together various stakeholders – parents, teachers, education officers, etc. to ensure unbridled access to quality education. As a part of the program, we organize education rallies, conduct home visits, parent meetings, teachers meetings, education and documentation drives, open school admissions, etc. By connecting various stakeholders, we aim to ensure accountability and therefore commitment of all the actors who partake in the education process of a child.

With parent meetings not only in the beginning of the academic year, but throughout, we encourage parents to actively take interest in their child’s academic journey.

Education Drive activities organized by us saw enthusiastic participation of children, parents and teachers.

We reconnected 10 children to the education system through Madhya Pradesh Open Schooling. Out of the 7 children who were enrolled last year, 2 cleared their 10th standard exams, one of whom joined regular school in Bhopal in 11th standard.

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Priya's story is the kind that elders tell the young to inspire them. She was forced to quit school and help with household chores when Priya got a supplementary in 9th standard. Adolescent age for Bedia girls brings with it unique vulnerabilities and hardships; young girls in the community are presented with two options – marriage or entering prostitution. Everything that becomes accessible with education isn't considered to be important for women – access to spaces, financial independence, etc. Therefore, girls have to earn every academic opportunity they get, and failure could not only lead to dropping out of school but also to a coerced entry into prostitution.

For us, it was hence, imperative that Priya be reconnected to education without any delay.

Our educator in the village conducted various home visits to Priya's home. Not only did our educator convince her parents to let her take her 10th standard exams through Madhya Pradesh State Open School, she also managed to get permissions for Priya to attend the TIE workshop 2017.

With her spirits rekindled after the TIE Workshop, Priya started preparing for her exams.

With the combined efforts of Samvedna's team, Priya was able to clear her Open School examination. She is now enrolled in a regular school in Bhopal and aims to become a successful lawyer someday.

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## **PANKH**

374 children enrolled in Pankh Classes across our project villages.

The program aims to empower children in villages with wings of knowledge, and transform them into agents of change within their immediate realities of village and community life. Pankh Classes, conceived to address a variety of concerns, are classes guided by Educators appointed by Samvedna in each of our project villages.

Our classes act as a supplement to children's regular school education, and provide children with a platform where they can voice their opinions and express themselves – the curriculum for the classes comprises of not just academic

syllabus but also has ample room for creativity to bloom. Through these classes, we ensure a conducive and nurturing environment for our children in the villages.

## य से EUREKA

य से Eureka is an anthology of ideas, and an eclectic mix of tools to convey those ideas to children. Devised as a non-formal education platform, Eureka aims to create awareness among children about their social context, and empower them to approach their immediate reality from rights-perspective.



185 Eureka sessions conducted in 12 primary schools across 14 villages in 6 blocks.

To be able to successfully deliver the objectives of Eureka, it's imperative that the pillars of our program – our Educators and Balmitras stand on a fortified foundation. “Eureka से पहले क्या”, designed for members of our ground staff, therefore aimed at ensuring that the program is deeply rooted in the values and philosophies that Samvedna upholds.

The training had two components – skills, and themes. Skills such as communication, creating activities, and presentation, were directed



at the participants' holistic development. Themes of the module were focused on the immediate social realities of caste and gender, and how these social realities become a hurdle for children trying to access their rights.

“Eureka से पहले क्या” was a three-day residential workshop in which 14 members from Samvedna's on-field team participated.

## HEALTH AND HYGIENE WORKSHOPS



70 girls participated in 4 workshops

With an aim to initiate positive conversations around menstruation, and promote hygienic menstrual habits and practices among, workshops on menstrual hygiene were conducted with adolescent girls in various villages and also with girls living in the hostel in Bhopal city.

The workshop was centered on menstrual practices and the biological process of “how” and “why” of menstruation. Screening of a documentary based on the subject of menstrual

hygiene was followed by an interactive session. Based on the responses and queries of the participants, the workshop facilitators discussed various biological processes in details – as a lot of the participants were not aware of the internal organs in the human female body and therefore, the facilitators explained the female reproductive system with the help of a diagram.

While clearing the misconceptions about menstrual taboos, the facilitators stressed that the participants did not feel burdened to revolutionize the way menstruation is perceived. “Change” is a slow process and the emphasis of the workshop was on healthy and hygienic menstrual practices. The participants were encouraged to have dialogues with their mothers, sisters or other women in their families about menstruation, and it was highlighted that only conversations can lead to safer and healthier practices.

## **BAN PATANG**

Samvedna promotes education as a tool to combat caste-based inter-generational prostitution that is practiced by the Bedia community. Our programs Pahal, Pankh, Udaan and य से Eureka are geared towards connecting and reconnecting children to formal systems of education, improving academic performance, and increasing retention rates in village schools. Along with education, we believe that a strong sense of community among the children such that they begin to think about the welfare of their peers will be a crucial contribution in our goal of preventing prostitution. To this effect, program Ban Patang seeks to introduce sports among the community youth and children with the dual aim of promoting physical fitness and making stronger peer groups in the villages.

Along with CRY, we successfully introduced Badminton as a sport in two of our project



villages. 6 children from the two villages participated in the PNB MetLife Junior Badminton Championship and 3 of them won a sports scholarship worth rupees 1 lakh each! The scholarship supports a professional coach, nutritious diet, a complete badminton and training-related costs for the selected children. The two selected children will compete in JBC 2019 again after having received training.

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STORIES OF CHANGE  
**A SERVICE OF DREAMS**

Shreyansh is a small 10 year old boy who studies in class 4. His tiny frame will never let you imagine how high the shuttle flies every time it hits his racquet. He is one of the two children who received the Junior Badminton Championship Scholarship. Every weekend, Shreyansh travels about 80 kilometres to the city of Bhopal from his residential hostel in Shamshabad. Shreyansh and his older sister both live away from home to pursue their education, while their mother resides in their native village, Chhapariyai. After their father passed away, all that their mother aspires for is to ensure a bright future for both her children. “His father would’ve been so proud today”, says Shreyansh’s mother as she wipes tears from her face. She’s proud too. For a child belonging to the Bedia community in the village, going to Delhi to play in a Badminton Championship is no small feat.

Shreyansh wants to become a police officer and he believes that playing a sport such as badminton will help set him up for success in a profession that requires hard work and discipline. Shreyansh would like to practice more and more often but the distance between the practice facility and his hostel in Shamshabad becomes a deterrent. Shreyansh does get practice on the weekends when he comes to the city for an extended weekend stay.

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## **CAPTURING CHILDREN’S VOICES**

With an objective to gather children’s opinions, dreams, and the challenges that they face, a participative activity was conducted in one of our project villages in Bhopal district. The points discussed were presented in the form of a child-led manifesto to the potential leaders of the nation in Delhi.





17 girls and 8 boys participated in the activity.

2 children from our project village went to Delhi to contribute to the child-centered manifesto.

25 children participated in the activity. The children, working in smaller groups listed services and spaces that were of direct relevance to them – availability of higher schools, health services, better roads, street lights, lack of toilets in schools, etc. They also spoke about attitudinal shifts that need to be initiated within the community – children discussed how it was important for parents to give equal educational opportunities to their sons and daughters. After discussing in their smaller groups, all the children came together as a big group and decided to present the points discussed in the Gram Sabha.



# PROGRAMS IN BHOPAL

## UDAAN

**40** new enrollments in city government schools and hostels.

**5** girls at the verge of entering prostitution among the 40.

**3** girls enrolled for National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education

Every year since 2012, children have been pursuing their education in Bhopal with Samvedna's support. Though we constantly engage in the villages to mitigate vulnerabilities for children, in an attempt to remove a child from a precarious situation, we bring children to the city and get them enrolled in government schools and hostels.

These hostels give children the metaphorical and physical distance that they require from their village. In the hostels, we also provide for supplementary classes that help the students to cope with academic expectations that

are higher in city schools as compared to those in their native villages.



39 children enrolled for  
Post-matric Scholarship.

39 children residing in city  
hostels getting government  
pocket money.

45 digital profiles of children  
completed.

This year, 40 new students joined us in the city! To make sure that the students could participate in their schools without any hindrance, we also distributed school kits comprising of a school bag, notebooks, stationary items and a rain coat to our students.

## **HIP HIP HOORAY**

With our program Hip Hooray, we take our children residing in Bhopal on a fun-filled journey towards a better version of themselves. The program has a dual aim of increasing the retention of our children in city schools and hostels, and also giving them exposure to the city. This year, our children visited museums, parks and also participated in workshops!





We spent a day at the Museum of Man, and another day at Bharat Bhavan, where the children drew pictures of whatever they wished with a beautiful view of the upper lake. We also spent a few Sundays at the Chinar Park, flying rockets, revising before exams began or just enjoying the winter sun!

## HEALTH CAMP

Coming to Bhopal means that children's environment is completely altered – their food habits, and their daily routines are transformed. As they cope with a demanding school curriculum, their bodies cope with the changes in their physical environment.

35 children tended to at the Health Camp.

To ensure that our children remain in good health and don't miss-out on school because of falling sick, we organized a health and check-up camp at the Government DNT Boys' Hostel, Gandhinagar on October 13, 2018. A team of doctors from Vijay Shree Hospital attended to the children.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

## PARENTS' MEETING

Samvedna has been successful in enrolling 36 children from across 11 villages in various schools and hostels in Bhopal in this academic year. At present, 50 children from the many villages and districts of Madhya Pradesh are pursuing their education in the city.

Various stakeholders partake in the development of a child. It is only when these stakeholders work in cohesion that a smooth-running system is built that works for the benefit of children.

16 parents from across 5 villages, and 32 children now staying in 7 hostels across the city attended the meeting.

Understanding the significance of this system, and the importance of working in tandem with each other was the major objective of the meeting that was organized on the 9th of September, 2018 at the Pastoral Centre in Bhopal.

The meeting addressed parents' and children's



concerns regarding staying in Bhopal in government hostels and attending school in the city, and how parents can support their children and Samvedna in the entire process – showing interest in the child’s performance, encouraging her to participate and attend school every day, making sure that the child’s documents are complete, etc.



Apart from the parents’ meeting in Bhopal, we also organized parents’ meetings in every village to make sure that parents feel that they’re rightful participants in the education process. In these meetings, parents of children pursuing education in Bhopal also spoke about their perspective and the growth that’s visible in their children. These meetings helped us in ensuring that education becomes a community initiative, rather than just being an individual family prerogative; parents influence each other as a community and ensure that children continue to pursue their education.

## **SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

With our Education Drive and community interventions such as regular parents’ meetings, we ensured that Bedia community has an active representation in the School Management Committees of their villages.



Due to the efforts of the SMC, members from different castes come together to celebrate Republic Day in the village.

In one of our project villages, with efforts of the SMC members, members from all the castes living in the village came together to celebrate Republic Day. Different competitions were organized for the children and members from the Gurjar community and Bedia community shared the stage to handover prizes to all the winners!

## **YOUTH GROUP AND WOMEN'S GROUP**

Prostitution among the Bedia operates like a community enterprise where all the members have a role to play – men remain willingly unemployed and become pimps while older women groom the new entrants. Therefore, to be able to break the vicious cycle of caste-based intergenerational prostitution, it is imperative that all members of the community are engaged in dialogue, and are also explore alternative sources of livelihood.



To engage with the youth and women of the community, we formed a youth group – Kalawat Yuva Mandal, and a Women’s group – Tejaswi Mahila Mandal, in one of our project villages. The Women’s Groups discuss the various ways women of the community can engage in paid work, the skill-building courses that they can take, etc. Kalawat Yuva Mandal is affiliated to Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK) through which employment opportunities become available to the members. In an effort towards team building, the youth group also plays cricket.

Due to the efforts of the SMC, members from different castes come together to celebrate Republic Day in the village.

## **CHILDREN’S GROUPS**

In 2017, after the Theatre in Education Workshop, children’s groups were created in all our project villages. Children’s Groups can be seen as an outcome of the constant churning



process that य से Eureka and Pankh Classes are. Children's Groups function independently with support from their Educator. The groups discuss issues that affect them, or are seen to affect the community and the society. On the eve of Republic Day, Ekta Children's Group from one of our villages performed a play before all the villagers about girls' education.



2 new children's groups formed in 2 of our project villages.

In another village in Rajgarh district, the Children's Group collected money amongst themselves to organize an outing to the Narsingarh Wildlife Sanctuary.

## CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION

Samvedna truly believes in the potential of children as agents of change for the Bedia community. Thus, our strategies are centered on children and their wellbeing, and are grounded in the child rights perspective. With our programs, we wish to create a cadre educated and aware Bedia youth who will not only support the education of future generations, but will also be in a position to resist exploitation in the name of tradition.

Our children are our utmost priority and we want them to feel appreciated and loved. Therefore, Children's Day is an occasion that we celebrate with zeal and gusto! All members

of the ground staff marked the occasion with various games and activities in their own villages.



A special *Bal Mela* was organized in a village primary school in Vidisha district where all the children in the village participated. Children from the neighboring village also joined the celebration! They performed a skit about how the Pankh class has gotten them more interested in their studies – the Educators are polite and respectful towards the kids and introduce games in their lessons is what makes Pankh classes different from their regular school classes.

Sack race, lemon and spoon race were also organized where all the kids participated! The winners were given notebooks and sketch pens as prizes. All the other students received notebooks or crayons for their enthusiastic participation.

The youth group of the village supported Samvedna team in organizing and managing the entire program, making the event truly successful!

## SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES

Linking members of the Bedia community to various social benefit schemes provided by the government is an important part of our work. This empowers the community to look for solutions, and take ownership of the work that we're all engaged in.

5 families in one of our villages get their BPL cards with the help of Samvedna representatives.

45 Aadhaar cards of students updated by Samvedna representatives.

14 caste certificates of students updated by Samvedna representatives.



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The small group of women of this village is a true picture of nonchalant chutzpah. Their unassuming mannerism will never let you suspect that they're the ones with whose collective effort, the village now has a functioning water line.

The village was plagued by the scarcity of water. In the scorching summer months, the taps would run dry, and women would have to fetch water from as far as two kilometres. It was obviously a women's issue – burdened with household chores, women would have to make several trips under an unrelenting sun, on ground that seemed like burning coal to get enough water.

Tormented, all women would complain but didn't know what to do. Manu, a Samvedna member, spoke to a small group of 5-6 women, and motivated them to approach the sarpanch to get their grievance redressed.



On hearing the matter, the sarpanch said that the matter will be looked into but when the women followed-up, they didn't get a satisfactory response. Even though the sarpanch is a woman, she is powerless. "The men get women to put the seal...otherwise the man is the real sarpanch...they're the ones who get things done" says Manu about the woman sarpanch of her village.

Not to be easily let down, the women decided to pursue the matter. They got together and made a plan, and Manu called the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Helpline and registered a complaint.

Within 15-20 days of calling the CM Helpline the village had a new tube-well, the abandon pipeline of the village is functional now and every house in the village had water.

"Some order must've come from the authorities...and then the sarpanch got a tube-well for the village", says Manu about her experience.

After the village got a new tube-well, now the water supply is regular for four hours daily. So much so, that Manu's brother is able to wash his motorbike every second day!

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# NETWORKING

As an organization our sole aim is to work for the people of the Bedia community and ensure that maximum benefits and opportunities become accessible to them. For this, along with the efforts that we make as an organization, we also work with various other organizations.

- In collaboration with Rajgarh ChildLine, we organized an awareness activity for children on the issue of Child Rights and CHILDLINE 1098. This awareness camp was organized in 2 village primary schools in the district. Project Director of ChildLine oriented the students about their rights and what they can do if those rights are violated.
- We connected 2 youths from one of our project villages in Raisen district to work as Data Collectors with “Muskan” for a period of 3 months. This not only helped them

to get an experience of outside social systems but also gave them an opportunity to explore different means of earning a livelihood.

- We became a part of Snapdeal's initiative that facilitates people to donate stationary to underprivileged children, and received 621 kits that were distributed among children in our project villages.
- Akhil Bhartiya Kalawat Mahasabha is a state-wide network of the Bedia community that aims to collectivise the voices the members of the community and promote education for all children, especially girls, and encourage members of the community to opt for alternative means of earning livelihood. We connected the Akhil Bhartiya Kalawat Mahasabha with a larger association of De-notified Tribes brought together by "Muskan". This will help the Mahasabha to identify their concerns with those of other De-notified Tribes and work towards sustainable strategy for the community.





# THEATRE IN EDUCATION

## 2018

TIE 2017 was a four-day residential workshop that was conducted in Bhopal by renowned theatre and stage artist Walter Peter – from June 13 to June 17 – comprising 19 children from 4 different villages of 2 districts. The workshop presented the students with a potpourri of activities that included drawing, painting, singing, theatre exercises, etc.

TIE 2017 helped us vision TIE 2018 bigger, and better, with 51 children and 10 educators participating from 7 villages across 4 districts in Madhya Pradesh, from May 1 to May 3, in Bhopal. With Mr. Walter Peter back at the helm, the 3-day residential workshop – packed with a bouquet of enriching activities – was more informative, interactive, impactful, and insightful.

TIE 2018 was another milestone towards equipping our staff and child-leaders across our project villages. It initiated the process of unearthing and enhancing hidden qualities and abilities of our participants. The workshop creates a conducive environment that promotes peer-learning along with the learning that happens through various activities. The residential

workshop also gave the Educators and Balmitras an opportunity to bond with the children, laying foundation for a strong and meaningful relationship in the future.

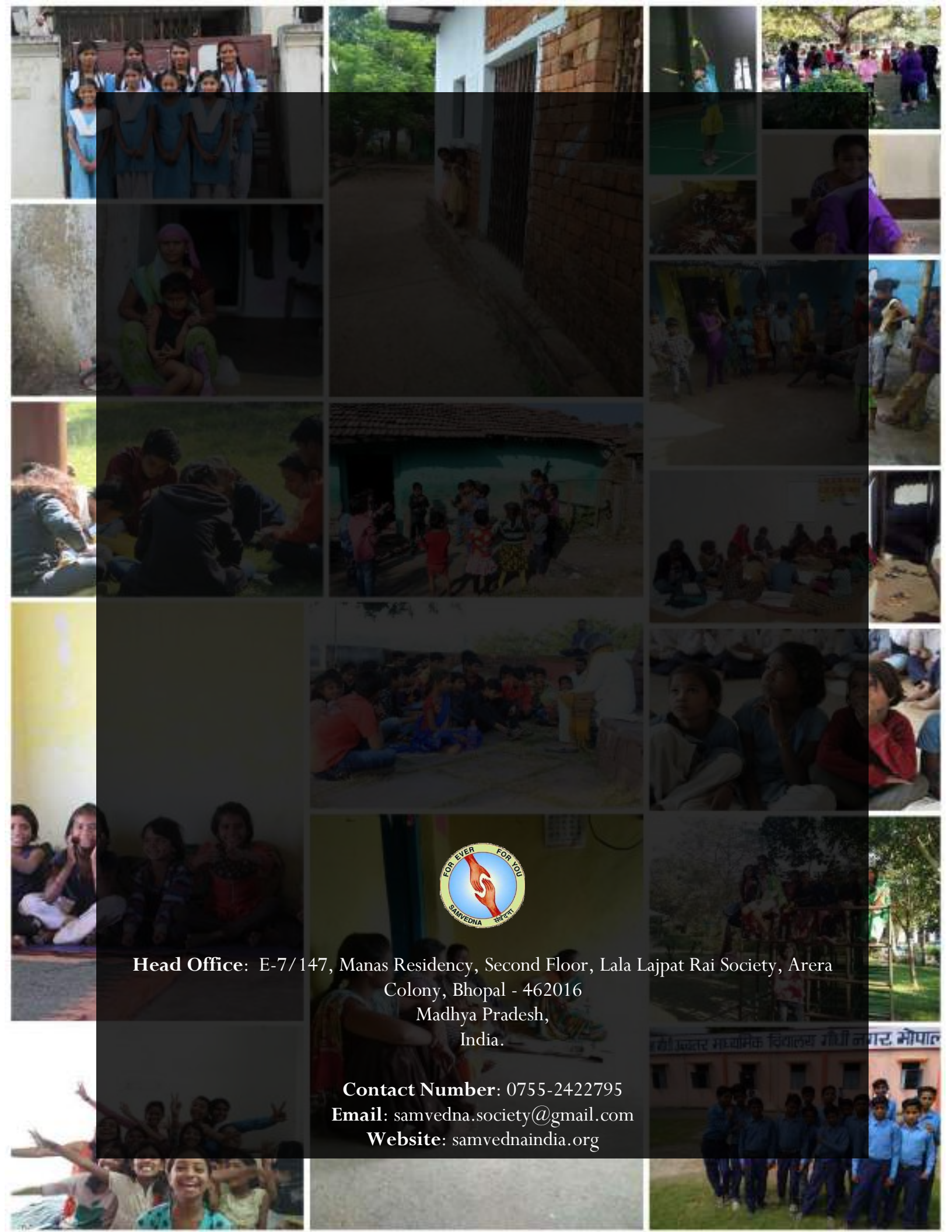


# OUR GRATITUDE

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