

SEWA's Members' Eleven Questions

In our experience, poor women's growth, development and employment occurs when they have work and income security and food security. It also occurs when they are healthy, able to have child care and have a roof over their heads. In order to ensure that we are moving in the direction of our two goals of Full Employment and Self-Reliance, constant monitoring and evaluation is required. In a membership-based organization, it is the members' priorities and needs which necessarily shape the priorities and direction of the organization. Hence, it is appropriate that members themselves have developed their own yardstick of evaluation. The following eleven questions have emerged from discussions with our members and continually serve as a guide for all members, group leaders, executive committee members and full-time organisers at SEWA. It is also useful for monitoring SEWA's progress and the relevance of its various activities and their congruence with our members' reality and priorities. It also leads to increased accountability of SEWA's leaders and organisers to the members.

The Eleven Questions of SEWA:

1. Have more members obtained more employment?
2. Has their income increased?
3. Have they obtained food and nutrition?
4. Has their health been safeguarded?
5. Have they obtained child care?
6. Have they obtained or improved their housing?
7. Have their assets increased? (like their own savings, land house, work-space, tools of work, licenses, identity cards, cattle and shares in cooperatives and all in their own name.)
8. Has the workers' organizational strength increased?
9. Has workers' leadership increased?
10. Have they become self-reliant both collectively and individually?
11. Has their education increased?

Questions 1 to 7 are linked to the goal of full employment while 8 to 11 are those concerned with SEWA's goal of self-reliance. However, each of these are interconnected to each other.

The SEWA Movement

SEWA is both an organization and a movement. The SEWA movement is enhanced by its being a 'sangam' or confluence of three movements: the labour movement, the cooperative movement and the women's movement. But it is also a movement of self-employed workers, their own, home-grown movement with women as the leaders.

Through their own movement women become strong and visible. Their tremendous economic and social contribution becomes recognised.

All the organizations promoted by SEWA—SEWA Bank, the cooperatives, associations, producers' groups and other such membership-based organizations—constitute the SEWA Family. These sister organizations are also part of the SEWA Movement, spread across eleven districts of Gujarat.

But the movement has crossed Gujarat's borders. In 1982, SEWA Bharat was formed. Today there are **six** other registered organizations, both unions and associations in SEWA. These are SEWA Madhya Pradesh, SEWA Bihar, SEWA Uttar Pradesh, SEWA Delhi, SEWA Rajasthan and SEWA Kerala. In 2006, organising of workers was initiated in Murshidabad, West Bengal and in Uttarakhand state. SEWA Bharat promotes the formation of these organizations and supports them by way of capacity-building and other developmental programmes. SEWA is now registered as a national union, with the members of the **seven** sister SEWAs constituting its membership.

Several other national networks are also part of the SEWA movement, SEWA is a co-founder of these and continues to be active in them. These include the National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), HOMENET India and HOMENET South Asia.

In addition, SEWA has helped or is associated with workers' movements in other countries—in South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, Turkey, Yemen, Thailand, Cambodia, Korea, Philippines, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. We are also affiliates of the International Federation of Food, Beverage, Tobacco Agriculture and Allied Workers (IUF), International Chemical, Energy and Metal workers Union, International Textile Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF) and the International Building Workers (IBW).

SEWA has also recently joined the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) as an affiliate. This was a major step forward.

SEWA is a founder member of STREETNET, an international organization of street vendors, struggling for their rights world-wide. Its members are unions and other workers' organizations from all continents. Similarly, SEWA is a founder of Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising (WIEGO), an organization promoting the issues and campaigning for the right of informal women workers across the globe. Policy-makers, researchers and organizers of membership-based organizations of women workers constitute its membership.