

The Sehgal Foundation

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**Working
Together to
Empower
Rural India**





About the Foundation

The Sehgal Foundation was registered as a Trust in India in 1999 to further the well-being of rural Indian communities.

The Foundation assists programs that are designed to promote sustainable development at the village level. The work of the Foundation is supported by the Sehgal Family Foundation based in the United States. Currently, the Foundation implements its programs in the state of Haryana, India.



Mission

To make a visible difference in the quality of life of the rural people through better health, education, skills building, and increased income.

To help increase farm productivity by promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and linking the farmer with the market.

To undertake crop improvement research, and support programs in biodiversity and genetic conservation.



Our Model

Integrated, Sustainable Village Development (ISVD)

Village development is a complex task in India as it involves many dimensions. Thus, the Foundation pursues an integrated approach to sustainable village development. The approach rests firmly on the belief that all assistance must empower people to participate in furthering their own development. It begins by listening to villagers and continues by encouraging their initiatives.

The ISVD model focuses on four programs:

- Water Management
- Income Enhancement
- Rural Health
- Family Life Education

Community Organization, Communications, Information Technology and Infrastructure Building support these programs.

We work through Project Implementation Teams that are based in the villages, and the Panchayat (the village council) is actively involved in all of our projects. In case the Panchayat is inactive or lacks leadership, a **Village Level Institution (VLI - Gram Vikas Sanstha** in Hindi) is set up. The Foundation starts the capacity building of VLIs from the beginning by involving its members at all stages of planning and implementing. This empowers VLI members to undertake the development projects independently even after the Foundation withdraws from a village. VLIs can be registered under the 'Indian Society Act,' which lends it credibility and allows easy access to governmental and non-governmental funds and facilities.

Community Centers are set up as local resource hubs, which cater to the needs of a cluster of villages. These centers provide facilities for training, demonstration, information, and services including a library, computer room, Family Life Education class room, farmer information cell, and limited residential accommodation for volunteers.

Expansion Strategy



Academy for Rural Research & Development

After successful implementation of the ISVD model in select villages, we are now ready to replicate this model in other villages through **Village Champions (VC)**. We believe that the driver behind sustainable development is the VC. VCs are individuals chosen from the villages who are eager to take part in village development and who also demonstrate the leadership attributes necessary to motivate the community.

The Foundation's scaling up approach is through intensive training of the VCs at our **Academy for Rural Research and Development (ARRAD)**, being built in Gurgaon, Haryana. VCs are trained to implement the ISVD model including setting up the VLI and facilitating its activities. They are deployed in the villages to lead the way to development.

ARRAD is a training institute which uses computer-based learning systems to train the VCs. In addition to training VCs, it will have facilities for research in social sciences and advocacy. ARRAD will extend its training facilities to other NGOs and volunteers interested in rural development.

The Family Life Education program is designed to empower the youth, primarily adolescent girls. The curriculum includes basic literacy skills, awareness of hygiene, reproductive health and family planning. The program also addresses personal development issues like confidence-building, decision-making, and leadership. Social issues such as early marriages and gender inequality are also discussed with parents and community leaders.

Activities Underway

- Impart literacy curriculum from State Resource Center (SRC)
- Teach life skills curriculum from Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA).
- Provide tailoring classes
- Conduct motivational camps
- Set up youth clubs
- Provide recreation
- Focused group discussions with parents
- Work with schools
- Set up libraries
- Revitalize village education committees



The Rural Health Program seeks to inculcate a healthy way of life and a sense of responsibility for one's own well-being. Villagers are sensitized to inexpensive methods of promotive, preventive, and curative care. Non-functional health centers are revived and strong links are established with competent healthcare systems.

Activities Underway

- Training in safe motherhood and childhood
- Educating on sexually transmitted diseases
- Promoting family planning
- Training in the prevention of reproductive tract infections
- Emphasising on personal hygiene
- Preventing communicable diseases
- Promoting the use of latrines
- Providing Dai (midwife) training
- Working with government sub-centers



Rural Health

Income Enhancement is one way to accelerate growth in rural areas. Unemployment and under-employment are chronic problems in these areas. Women and youth in particular, need opportunities for income enhancement. Therefore, the Foundation creates opportunities to generate means of supplementing the average income of the villagers in a sustainable manner.

Activities Underway

Agriculture Initiatives

- Promote use of vermi-composting
- Encourage use of chisel
- Educate on raised bed cultivation
- Encourage inter-cropping and crop diversification
- Train on integrated pest management
- Promote drip irrigation
- Provide market linkages
- Set up farmers' associations

Common Lands Development

- Encourage tree plantation
- Promote fodder cultivation
- Protect root stocks
- Introduce fisheries

Entrepreneurship and Skills Training

- Provide linkages to vocational training
- Assist in business development services
- Set up self-help groups
- Encourage group enterprises
- Endogenous tourism in Jyotisar, Kurukshetra



Income Enhancement



Water Management is crucial to any developmental activity due to its immediate relevance to village health and prosperity. Thus, this program is fundamental to the work of the Foundation. The program focuses on water harvesting structures to recharge the ground water. It also ensures that a sufficient supply of safe drinking water is available in close proximity to the village.

Activities Underway

- Building check-dams
- Constructing wells, which include recharge wells and the rejuvenation of defunct wells
- Constructing roof water harvesting structures
- Promoting water literacy
- Recycling water through soak pits
- Conserving water and soil



Water Management

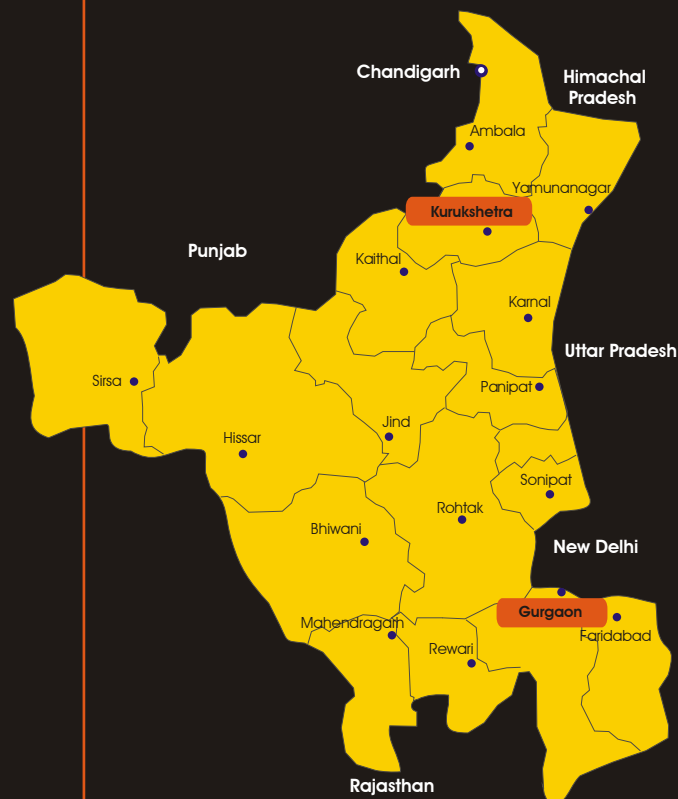
Family Life Education



Area of Operations



Map of Haryana



Support Programs

Community Organization:

The Foundation has a dedicated team who regularly visit villages to work with the community. Discussions are organized with target groups before implementing any project. This partnership invariably brings the best solutions to light for resolving issues with insight and sensitivity to the socioeconomic and geographic conditions of the area. One of the important goals of this program is to set up VLIs and support the Village Champions.

Communications:

This program provides information on the Foundation's initiatives to the village communities and to the public at large. To this end, we manage a database, documentation library, photo library, and a website. Training manuals are being translated in to the local language to train the Village Champions, volunteers, and other target groups.

Information Technology:

The overall goal of this program is to ensure that the essential information needs of villagers are met through computer literacy training and exposure to web-based information retrieval. Interactive IT tools are put to use for community organization and informal education purposes in support of the Foundation's programs.

Partnerships

The Foundation partners with select organizations. These partnerships vary in nature, depending on the identified needs and can be technical, financial or strategic. The Foundation maintains a broad network of contacts in all key areas, is constantly scouting for innovative rural technologies, and for the organizations doing high quality work in the field of rural development.



About the Founder

Dr. Suri Sehgal holds a PhD in Plant Genetics from Harvard University, and a diploma in business management from Harvard Business School. He is founder and chairman of Maize Technologies International, Austria and Misr Hytech Seed International, Egypt. He is founder and former chairman of the Proagro Group of Companies, India. Dr Sehgal is actively involved in the development of the rural sector in India through the Sehgal Family Foundation.