

## Job Well Done ~ B. R. Poonia



Skilled social scientist and respected member of Sehgal Foundation's original team, B. R. Poonia, retired in December after almost two decades of leadership and insight that made a positive impact on the lives of rural people in the villages of Mewat and Alwar districts of Haryana and Rajasthan respectively. Poonia came to Sehgal Foundation with a master's degree in rural sociology from the University of Udaipur and twenty years of experience with organizations devoted to ending poverty, such as CARE India. Coming from a village in Rajasthan that was similar to the communities with the greatest needs where Sehgal Foundation's

development work began, Poonia led the team in mobilizing local community partnerships and strengthening village-level institutions.

Suri Sehgal describes Poonia as a person of high ethics, fairness, and compassion who served as "an important pillar and role model when we started the foundation in 1999."

As Sehgal Foundation evolved, Poonia remained a steady guide for the team and for the partner communities. He was instrumental in managing expectations and keeping clear the goal to work *with* (and not *for*) communities. He was quoted in *Together We Empower: Rekindling Hope in Rural India*, as assuring the community, "Whatever we do, we will do together."

As Poonia enters retirement, with plans to move close to family in Australia, master photography, learn to play the harmonium, and travel, he sent his Sehgal Foundation colleagues a long list of wise words he had recorded over the years as said by Dr. Sehgal. On the list was this advice: "Connect with the best."

Mission accomplished.