Swaniti Initiative

Annual Report
March 2020-March 2021

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A year to reflect…

2020 has been a trying year on so many fronts. With the outbreak of the covid pandemic, we have all taken pause to introspect on what is truly important. It has also exposed the importance of local governments to protect the most vulnerable. On numerous occasions we have received panicked calls from administrators for support. This has made us realize how important it is to support local governance and further gotten us driven about our work. Whether it was how to manage the migrants returning or how to get elderly food, we have worked on a diverse set of problem.

Over the past year, we have also reinvented much of our approaches and put in a lot more effort to build community response systems given how communities have become central to this discussion. This has means that we have increased our focus on partnerships for the Jaano app, a tool that provides public reviews of government institutions.

The pandemic showed us that broken public institutions, if ignored, can come back to have significant impact at a later date. Consider the local public health institutions for example, that have been broken for so long and there has been little effort to correct them. Now in the pandemic it has created a major crisis. It is important now, more than ever, that we fully realize and act promptly to fixing governance tools. If the government is our first social protection system, then we need to ensure that it remains strong!

-    Rwitwika Bhattacharya, CEO

ABOUT SWANITI INITIATIVE

Swaniti Initiative is a social enterprise that strengthens local governance by improving delivery of public services. We leverage research, data and a knowledge base of public service delivery to create the most impact. Swaniti has been working with state and local governments to strengthen those public programs. We help overcome human capital gaps, knowledge limitations and lack of data insights by placing localized teams who are catalytic to the development process. We work in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Delhi. Swaniti has helped mobilized over 25 million dollars of unutilized government funding toward core programs and has directly impacted the lives of 750,000+ people.

The Problem

Lack of skilled personnel affecting operations

Weak CSO partnerships leading to failures in scaling interventions
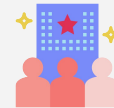
Limited monitoring and data-collection

Our Solution

Deploying experienced candidates and academicians for targeted support

Developing critical CSO partnerships to leverage industry experience

Leveraging data-driven tools to inform data-driven decision making

A Four-Step Process for Change

In order to achieve its objectives, Swaniti Initiative follows a four step approach for each project that ensure it not only creates sustainable solutions, but also solutions that are inclusive, replicable and modern. At the heart of all efforts, lie our beneficiaries and their lives. For Swaniti, impact is not only tangible, but also, life changing for multiple generations.

To reach its aims, the organisation undertakes four key activities in order to comprehensively look at problems and create innovative and effective solutions.

Providing technical assistance to state & district governments

Using a "push and pull" mechanism to identify gaps in public service delivery and innovate for inclusive development

Focusing on a "do-tank" model that combines knowledge and action

By using extensive research and stakeholder interactions to bring forward the best solutions

Building social capital for scale
by hyper localization solutions, embedding associates within each district and making sure that the programs are responding to community needs and programs.

Creating data driven insights enabled through a bottom-up approach

Are leveraged to enable evidence-based policy making.

Our Impact At a Glance

Currently operating on-ground in **six Indian States**

Working with **6 state governments** and **6 funding partners**
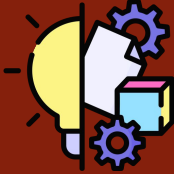
Swaniti has launched **10 active projects** in the past year

Our work has **directly impacted the lives of 750,000+ Indian citizens**

Our efforts have mobilized **25 million dollars of unutilized government funding**

Boots on ground grew by **85%** in the past year across 6 states.

Areas of work

Health Care

Green Jobs

Employment

Climate Change

Trafficking

Child Rights

Implementing Change: A Hands-on Approach To Improving Last-Mile Public Service Delivery Mechanisms

The Andhra Pradesh Social Development Project

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Swaniti's Andhra Pradesh Social Development project is aimed at improving the inclusion and access of the most vulnerable sections of the population in government programs through four core schemes: MGNREGS, Rythu Bharosa, IWMP and Unnat with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj. We strive to create a model state of Andhra Pradesh that has an inclusive and effective implementation process for government policies.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Working with Rural Development wing heads** to reduce leakages associated with rejected payments under MGNREGA
- **Carrying out a detailed study outlining discrepancies** between MGNREGA Social Audit and Vigilance Data
- **Coordinating development of dragon fruit plantation and mangrove plantation** plans supporting livelihoods for 2 lakh beneficiaries.
- **Conducting capacity building sessions** and contributing inputs to training programs under CFP (CLuster Facilitation Project) and UNNATI Projects.

SWANITI'S IMPACT

- **More than 2000 beneficiary and 800 government officials have been consulted** through FGDs and interviews.
- **The Department has accepted 15 recommendations proposed by Swaniti** under MGNREGS, Rythu Bharosa and IWMP.
- **The team aided the introduction of 6 new projects** under MGNREGS and IWMP.
- **Rejected payments have reduced from Rs. 9.95 crore in April 2020 to Rs 50 lakh** by February 2021 impacting 1 lakh people in the state.
- **Trained 200 field staff and government officers through 5 workshops** to aid skill development and strengthen grievance resolution mechanisms.

Ushering Change Through Green Jobs In Jharkhand

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Swaniti Initiative has been working in Jharkhand since August 2020 with the dual aim of generating alternate livelihood opportunities in environmentally-friendly and non-polluting sectors to increase local farmers' income by introducing clean energy initiatives. For this purpose, the team is working alongside the Directorate of Employment and Training and the Directorate of Horticulture.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- The team **carried out extensive consultations with 50 private sector organisations** to map their apprehensions in their shift towards a green economy.
- **The Directorate of Employment and four green enterprises were brought to a common platform** to facilitate collaboration.
- **Recommendations were submitted to the Directorate of Employment** to create a "Green Labour Board" to facilitate employment opportunities.

SWANITI'S IMPACT

- Based on Swaniti's inputs the **Directorate of Horticulture confirmed the incorporation of solar dryers into the next budget** in the upcoming financial year.
- **Additional funds were mobilized** through the Directorate of Horticulture to conduct workshops on sustainable horticulture and develop standardised modules for further trainings.
- **18 District Horticulture Officers (DHOs) and 37 Scientists participated in a training workshop** which facilitated inputs being submitted to the department.

Encouraging Political Prioritization towards Clean Air

With the support of the Clean Air Fund (CAF), Swaniti Initiative has been working towards addressing policy gaps in the field of air quality management in Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi. With the aim of encouraging policymakers and administrators to streamline the planning and implementation process of air quality mitigation efforts, the team hopes to help kickstart policy-level changes in the two states.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Working with the Agra Smart City CEO** to create a high-level inter-departmental body that acts as a one-stop nodal agency for all permissions for works to be carried out in the city.
- **Carrying out a detailed budgetary analysis** to submit recommendations for better financial resource management
- **Documenting case studies** highlighting the importance of sustainable architecture, political prioritization and innovations in sustainable solid waste management.

SWANITI'S IMPACT

- **Submitted a study on** "Finding Sources of Financing Options for Clean air initiatives" to the Agra Smart City CEO, to help them identify sources of funding for interventions being proposed.
- **Carried out detailed stakeholder analysis** with 5 nodal departments in Agra to understand the challenges faced by authorities in implementing programs for air pollution mitigation.
- **Analysed NCAP plans submitted by the target cities and identified** areas where overlaps were occurring. Submitted recommendations to ease the overlaps and encourage effective functioning.

Strengthening the Social Security Net In Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh has one of the largest informal and unskilled workforce in India which was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdown in the country. Since December 2020, Swaniti Initiative has been working in the state to provide technical support to the Government of Chhattisgarh to create **livelihood opportunities through the generation of green jobs.**

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Consulting with the **Department of Labour, Chhattisgarh,** to create and maintain a credible database of labourers and their families.
- Creating **a strategy plan for a comprehensive and robust single window clearance system** to support new green industries to be set up in the state.
- **Conducting an in-depth survey of brick kiln workers** to understand their socio-economic conditions.

SWANITI'S IMPACT

- **Conducted a survey amongst 16,230 families** to create a database of informal workers and collect key information around migration patterns, access to social security benefits, skill sets, etc.
- **Aided the creation of an online portal to allow new green industries to register** themselves and gain access to automated grievance escalation mechanisms.
- **Supported the redesign of registration forms** by amalgamating requirements across four different labour codes to aid compliance.

Development Through Data & Technology In Andhra Pradesh

A key area of work for Swaniti Initiative is to integrate policymaking with data and technology tools that would strengthen the last-mile delivery for public services across the country. To that effect, the team launched a "development through data and technology" program to institutionalize a system within a pioneer state government that will reduce information gaps between citizens and governmental bodies through data collection and feedback with the help of the Jaano app.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- **A three day induction programme was organised** for Associates who were trained on the various aspects of systems and processes of the Rural Development schemes with major focus on MGNREGA in the state.
- Post training the **Associates were deployed to four districts** -- Anantapur, Chittoor, Kurnool and Visakhapatnam -- to help streamline operations.
- **Awareness drives to improve visibility and encourage civic participation** were undertaken with key officials and village volunteers.

SWANITI'S IMPACT:

- **600+ MGNREGA workers and village volunteers were trained** in a period of 45 days.
- **Request for help by citizens increased from 28 in a month to 192** -- an increase of more than 550% due to the mobile application and visibility measures.
- **Almost 40% users were recurring and came back to address their problems** and help support their peers.
- **A 94% (182 out of 192) redressal rate was observed over a period of 45 days**, improving over an average wait time of 28 days.
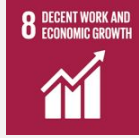
Developing Basic Infrastructure in Jharkhand

The Swaniti Initiative team is working under the District Mineral Trust Foundation (DMFT) in 'High priority sectors' such as health, education, skill development and women and child welfare. The aim of this engagement is to (a) to minimize/mitigate the adverse impacts, during and after mining, on the environment, health and socio-economics of people in mining districts; and (b) to ensure long term sustainable livelihoods for the affected people in mining areas. Swaniti currently has Project Management units in 6 districts of Jharkhand: Deoghar, Pakur, Ramgarh, Chatra, Ranchi and Gooda.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Supported the district to invested in new and controlled ways of fish production** to cater to the needs of the market and generate employment.
- **Helped transform drinking water and sanitation facilities** in various healthcare centres and households through distribution pipelines.
- **Supported the transformation of Anganwadi Centers** into model Anganwadis that can be replicated across the district.

SWANITI'S IMPACT

- **13 schemes were taken up by the DWSD Department** through laying of pipelines and setting up filtration plants with the work providing **tap water facility to 47,954 households.**
- **Helped 35 Anganwadi centers get supply of essential items** including include toys, utensils etc.
- **Helped ensure the provision of ID cards to each child** to ensure proper documentation in the district
- **Helped reduce the cost of safe drinking water** from INR 300/month to INR 62/month.

Collaborating With Policymakers Towards Effective & Efficient Systems and Processes

Fighting Forced Migration Across 11 States

Swaniti Initiative is the technical assistance partner for the India Working Group Against Trafficking (IWG), a network of 22 NGOs working across 11 states who are doing grassroots work to combat forced migration. Swaniti is working with IWG at a policy level to help them understand the ecosystem. Below is a glimpse of the work Swaniti has carried out this year.
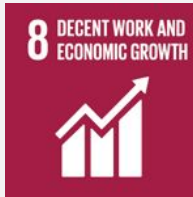
Engaging with Gov't Stakeholders

- Initiated **engagements with key policy stakeholders** such as members of the Labour Standing Committee.
- **Facilitated 8 questions being asked in the Parliament's 2021 Budget session** on the issue of human trafficking.
- **Submitted recommendations on the Social Security code to two high-level officials in GOI,** the Additional Secretary, MOLE and the Joint Secretary, Social Sector, GOI.
- **Carried out online roundtable discussions with MPs** to discuss impact of COVID-19.

Building Capacity of IWG Members

- **Organised two consensus-building webinars** (October 2020 and December 2020) with IWG partners to discuss and decide on core policy objectives and list clear asks for all policy priorities.
- **Organised a 2-day workshop** on developing a combined SOP on Victim Compensation, to be submitted to NALSA and SALSA on behalf of IWG.
- **Surveyed all IWG partners to gather insights on the functioning of AHTUs in partner states** and the situation of human trafficking.
- **Supported strategic planning activities** for partner organisations.

Protecting Child Rights Across India

In 2017, Swaniti Initiative began its work with UNICEF India by launching a secretariat aimed at helping protect child rights across the country. The secretariat was responsible for supporting the Parliamentarians Group for Children, an association of Parliamentarians who have come together across party lines to raise support and advocate for child rights issues in the Indian Parliament.

KEY INITIATIVES

- **Capacity building of Parliamentarians** for creating improved and sustainable policies through **online Roundtable conferences** with section experts to aid Parliamentarians in carrying out conversations in light of COVID-19.
- **Creating a safe platform for cross-party discussions** on issues of children's rights at quarterly meetings.
- **Creation of a newsletter** to inform Parliamentarians of latests news and best practises in the realm of child rights.
- **Creating media engagement pieces** through videos and opinion pieces to highlight challenges and achievements.

SWANITI'S IMPACT

- On the occasion of the World Children's Day on November 20, **organised a virtual Climate Parliament with children, in the presence of Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu, Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani**, 25 MPs and over 150 children representing children's groups.
- **A total of 6 online discussions were carried out with 130 MPs** who were sensitized on the impact of pandemic on children.
- **Collaborated with 20 MPs to raise awareness on social media platforms** about COVID safety and child rights.

Creating economic opportunity

UBER

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Swaniti Initiative collaborated on a project with UBER India, that looked to improve economic opportunities for its partners by streamlining formalisation through UBER. As a part of our analytical advocacy, Swaniti conducted primary and secondary research to assess the impact of UBER in employment generation, formalisation, and skill development within the gig economy through the lens of political representatives.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- In order to understand the importance of the gig economy and the impact of aggregators on employability and job creation, Swaniti worked to **conduct one-on-one conversations with Parliamentarians from tier-2 cities to strategise innovative part-time employment opportunities for young men and women**.
- Keeping in mind the effects of COVID-19 in India, multiple **closed door sessions were organised online via Zoom, which witnessed 35 MPs in attendance across party lines.** These sessions helped Parliamentarians better understand the gig economy, the potential of job creation through Uber, challenges for the labour market and the way forward.
- The **meetings resulted in a report** on best practises in designing effective policy interventions, protecting the interests of driver partners and aggregators and streamlining formal employment for UBER India.

Additional Technical Assistance Projects

Lancet Citizens Commission on Reimagining India's Health

Swaniti Initiative has collaborated with the Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health and is working under Dr. Nachiket Mor to study the factors that can lead to the political prioritization of healthcare in India. Swaniti Initiative has been working towards providing analytical frameworks and is planning to conduct a primary research study with Parliamentarians to understand the scope of expanding universal healthcare in India.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Swaniti Initiative has been instrumental in preparing **national and international case studies** to develop a framework in order to understand the occurrence and process of agenda-setting in healthcare
- As part of the study, researchers at Swaniti Initiative carried out **extensive interviews with academicians** across countries such as Turkey, Philippines, Brazil, and China.
- The Swaniti team has also prepared **mapped stakeholders and prepared a methodology for the primary study** to be undertaken with Parliamentarians.
- The research efforts of the team have culminated in **two draft research papers on political prioritization of healthcare**, namely - "Political economy of healthcare" and "International Political Prioritization of Healthcare"

Analysing The Economic Case For Renewable Energy Solutions

With the economic impacts of the current pandemic projected to be of historic proportions, the future of work is a source of major uncertainty, particularly in rural areas that have seen an influx of migrant workers. Swaniti Initiative supported the Association of Renewable Energy Agencies of States (AREAS), under the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE), in assess proposals submitted by businesses who aimed to help agricultural and business productivity through decentralised renewable energy (DRE).

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Working with the Director of AREAs, the Swaniti team **conducted an analysis of 27 business proposals** using the growth-share frameworks to map 10 organisations that would receive funding from the association.
- **Created a financing model** that laid out a structure for the distribution of funds and management of finances for DRE powered livelihood applications in various rural areas of India, to be utilised by AREAS during its fund disbursement process.
- Wrote **a paper analysing** best practises in designing effective policy interventions to promote the use to decentralised renewable energy at the last mile.

# Analysing measures taken to combat air pollution in New Delhi

Swaniti Initiative collaborated on a research project with the Delhi government to analyse important Orders passed by the various government bodies involved in pollution control activities in the National Capital Region. The aim of this activity was to identify gaps in implementation, understand the legislative actions various government bodies are taking to tackle the issue, and analyse the key challenges faced in implementation. Additionally, the team also compared various case studies and best practices to recommend models that can be implemented in the region.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Created a brief **analysing the status of work being carried out in NCR** with an emphasis on the government agency/department responsible for executing the Orders, the timeline for such execution (if any), and the current status of execution (wherever such information is available).
- Carried out multiple **stakeholder conversations with experts in the field** to understand the scope of work being carried out, its effectiveness and gather inputs towards final policy recommendations.
- **Submitted recommendations** based on our analysis to the Delhi government as well as the World Resources Institute.

Looking Forward - The Year Ahead
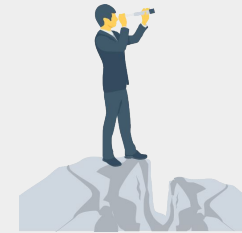
While the past year has been incredible for Swaniti Initiative, we aim to further work towards the following:

> SCALING UP OUR WORK ACROSS MORE REGIONS

As the year progressed, Swaniti Initiative's presence in state governments has steadily grown. Our research work, coupled with our on-the-ground experience have prepared us to work with more state governments to implement projects and bring forward sustainable growth for multiple states and the nation as a whole. Additionally, we are also looking forward to expanding our international focus with projects set to launch in Bangladesh and Mauritius this year.
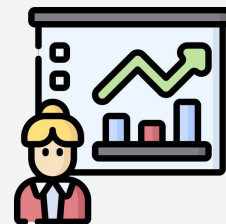
> WORKING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Over the past year, the world has seen the need for stronger and more sustainable communities and practises. While Swaniti has begun supporting 'Just Transition' in states like Jharkhand and supporting sustainable practises in Chhattisgarh, we hope to delve further into helping sustainable growth in the coming year. Key issues we are looking to expand our work on include the use of renewable energy, reducing air pollution and transitioning the informal workforce into green jobs.

> STRENGTHENING SUPPORT & FORMING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

We aim to continue strengthening our human capital and donor support. Swaniti's current team and alumni consist of tremendously talented professionals and we expect to continue building on this talent within the team. Additionally, the team looks forward to a year of strong partnerships and collaboration with different organisations towards our goals of helping the governance system function well. Swaniti looks forward to starting new projects very soon.

Funders and supporters

Funders	Description of project	Geography of support
Letzdream Foundation	Strengthening public service delivery in rural India	Andhra Pradesh
UNICEF	Secretariat support for Parliamentarians group for children	Pan-India
Freedom Fund	Setting up a secretariat to ensure social safety of migrant workers	Pan-India with a strong focus on UP and Bihar
Government of Jharkhand	Support in creating green jobs across Jharkhand	Key districts across Jharkhand
UBER India	Supporting parliamentary engagement towards employment generation	Pan-India
Ford Foundation	Supporting the use of data and technology in public service delivery	Key districts across Andhra Pradesh
Skoll Foundation	Creating social safety protection for migrant workers in Chhattisgarh	Chhattisgarh

We are thankful to our donors for their support!

OUR PARTNERS

SUPPORT SWANITI

Swaniti Initiative works to make governance in India more informed, effective, & transparent by providing actionable policy solutions and quality human capital to elected officials. It is a hard job, but one we are immensely happy and proud to do! To help us, please consider the following avenues:

> VOLUNTEER

Swaniti Initiative is driven by the relentless efforts of our motivated volunteers across India. Whether it is researching on core policy issues, developing case studies, assisting with field-level work or developing visuals for our talks, volunteers have been instrumental in building Swaniti. If you are interested in volunteering with us, write to swaniti@swaniti.in

> DONATE

Every single donation, no matter how big or small, helps us support our work in improving governance in India. Donations are tax-deductible and should be made out to "Swaniti Initiative". In-kind resources such as IT Equipment, and data sources are also of immense value for us. To learn more about giving to Swaniti, please write to us at swaniti@swaniti.in

> SPREAD THE WORD

Recruiting talented individuals to add value to the governance systems is not easy. If you are aware of driven professionals who are willing to support elected officials or craft actionable policy solutions, please let us know. Write to us at Swaniti@swaniti.in or visit www.swaniti.in

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to Swaniti Initiative – we couldn't have made an impact with your hard work, belief and commitment! We are especially thankful to our incredible advisors and partners, Parliamentarians who have provided us with immense encouragement to continue our work and our entire team and tireless volunteers who are transforming governance for a better India!