

Yuva Chetna Kendra: A Profile

1. Organisation's Name: Yuva Chetna Kendra
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Website yckindia.org
2. Year of Inception Nov 1984
3. Legal Status Registered under society registration act 21, 1860
Registration No. 67/1987-88 on 13 April 1987

Registered under FCRA No. 1 3 6 3 8 0 0 1 9
dated 9th April 1992

Registered under income Tax Act 12A

PAN No. AAATY1011D
4. Contact Person Paras Nath Singh
Secretary
Contact No. 09450680721
5. Background

Yuva Chetna Kendra (YCK) is a non-profit civil society organisation based in Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh, the most populated state in India. Like several other districts in eastern Uttar Pradesh, Deoria too is a backward, predominantly rural district. YCK enhances capacities of the poor and marginalised communities through a number of strategic interventions, mainly in the domains of agriculture based livelihood promotion, local self-governance, health and hygiene.

YCK came into existence in 1984 as a brainchild of a few young enthusiasts in Sidhua village in Deoria district of eastern Uttar Pradesh. Three years later YCK got a legal status when it was registered in 1987 as society. Subsequently it was also registered under relevant statutes for receiving foreign funds and under Income Tax Act, 1962, for income tax exemption.

Registration Details

- Registered as society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. Registration number:
- Registered under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 1975. Registration number:
- Registered under Income Tax Act, 1962. Registration number:

Vision, Mission and Strategy

Vision

Improving the quality of life of the poor and marginalised specially dalits and women

Mission

Developing capacities of deprived and weaker sections of the society and creating positive environment for this for linking them with the mainstream of development

Strategy

This involves following steps:

1. Need assessment study
2. Awareness and sensitisation
3. Organisation building
4. Strengthening of organisations built and other stakeholders like panchayats and government system
5. Promotion replicable Models and promotion of their extension strategeg
6. Convergence of organisations and stakeholders

Operational Area

YCK works in almost 60 gram panchayats spread over six development blocks in three districts:

| District | Block | Gram Panchayats |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Deoria | Desahi Deoria | 20 Gram panchayats |
| | Tarkulwa | 10 Gram panchayats |
| | Pathardeva | 02 Gram panchayats |
| | Rudrapur | 20 Gram panchayats |
| | Barhaj | 02 Gram panchayat |
| Kushinagar | Kasia | 01 Gram panchayat |
| Maharajganj | Ghughuli | 14 Gram panchayats |

These villages are a part of the area in a basin formed by rivers Rapti, Gorra, Ghaghra and Gandak. Five districts Deoria, Maharajganj, Kushinagar, Gorakhpur and Mau fall in this basin. Major interventions of the organisation are, however, focused in Deoria district, followed by Maharajganj district.

Team and Systems

Yuva Chetna Kendra YCK is headed by a 10-member Governing Board, whose secretary acts as ex officio director of the organisation. The Governing Board is the body responsible for policy formulation and giving directions to the organisation.

YCK has 23 full time workers, who have expertise in

- Participatory learning and appraisal (PLA)
- Self-help group management
- Group facilitation
- Agriculture-based livelihood and allied sectors

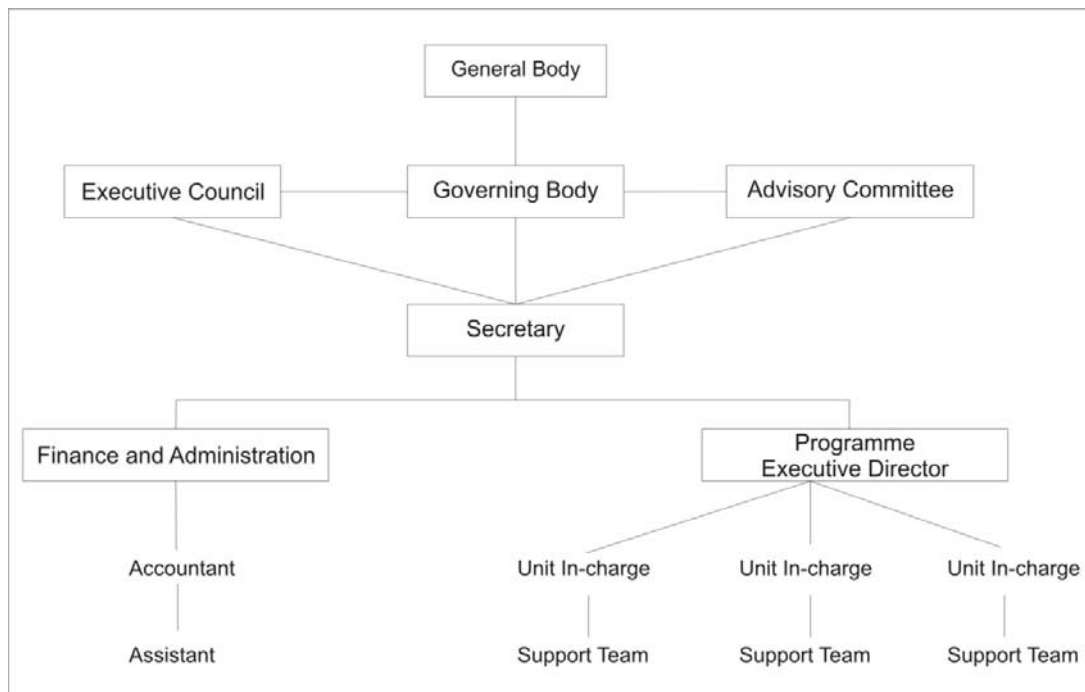
Services of expert consultants are taken from time to time as and when need arises. Apart from these a strong network of community based organisations helps the organisation in implementing its programmes for the development of the communities.

The organisation has a well knit system of reporting, financial record keeping and internal documentation. It has developed its own internal monitoring system. Based on this system, it reviews and steers programmes from time to time. Accounts of the organisation are audited every year by competent auditors. Based on the reports of the auditors financial statements are prepared.

Communication Team

A well knit communication team having 10 members is backbone of all the awareness generation and mobilisation efforts of the organisation. Folk media communication resource organisations at the state level have built capacity of the communication team. The communication team is proficient in staging street plays and puppet shows and singing. Some of the themes on which the communication team has staged performances include literacy, sanitation, agriculture, environment, disasters, group formation and management, panchayat voters' awareness campaign, and health, intoxication and immunisation.

The organogram is presented in the graphic below:



Infrastructure

YCK has a well-equipped central office and three field offices.

The central office is situated in Deoria city, off Kasia Road. This office has necessary facilities to facilitate the work, including sufficient number of computers, laptops and peripherals, broadband Internet connection and communication equipments. Diagonally opposite to the central office is training centre, which also has got limited lodging and boarding facility.

The three field offices are located at strategic locations in the project area. They are equipped with minimal infrastructural facilities.

Strengths and Constraints

Strengths

- Common understanding of team members and other stakeholders on developmental elements
- Community ownership of the outputs which have generated through its efforts
- Creation of commitment within team, which comprises facilitators, volunteers, community and other functionaries

Constraints

- Constraints in resources - personnel and infrastructure - to support locally developing community institutions
- Linkages with local bodies, government departments and other functionaries working on similar type of issues not developed strongly
- Still on bottom stage of the organisational goal
- To sustain efforts of the organisation a long term commitment with the community is required.

Interventions

Yuva Chetna Kendra works through seven major interventions:

1. Assessment Study, Planning and Research

All efforts of YCK are backed by need assessment, which is a continuous process for the organisation. Need assessment is done through participatory practices and forms the basis of strategic plan. Implementation of the programmes is backed by continued research. This leads to continued updation of the programme implementation.

Study, planning and research are not stand alone activities for YCK. They draw from all other activities and feed into them.

2. Organisation Building and Strengthening

Generally the most disadvantaged people lack voice and this becomes of the reason of their exploitation. Since its inception, YCK is organising such people into groups on the basis of their specific characteristics and requirements following participatory practices. So far the following groups have been formed:

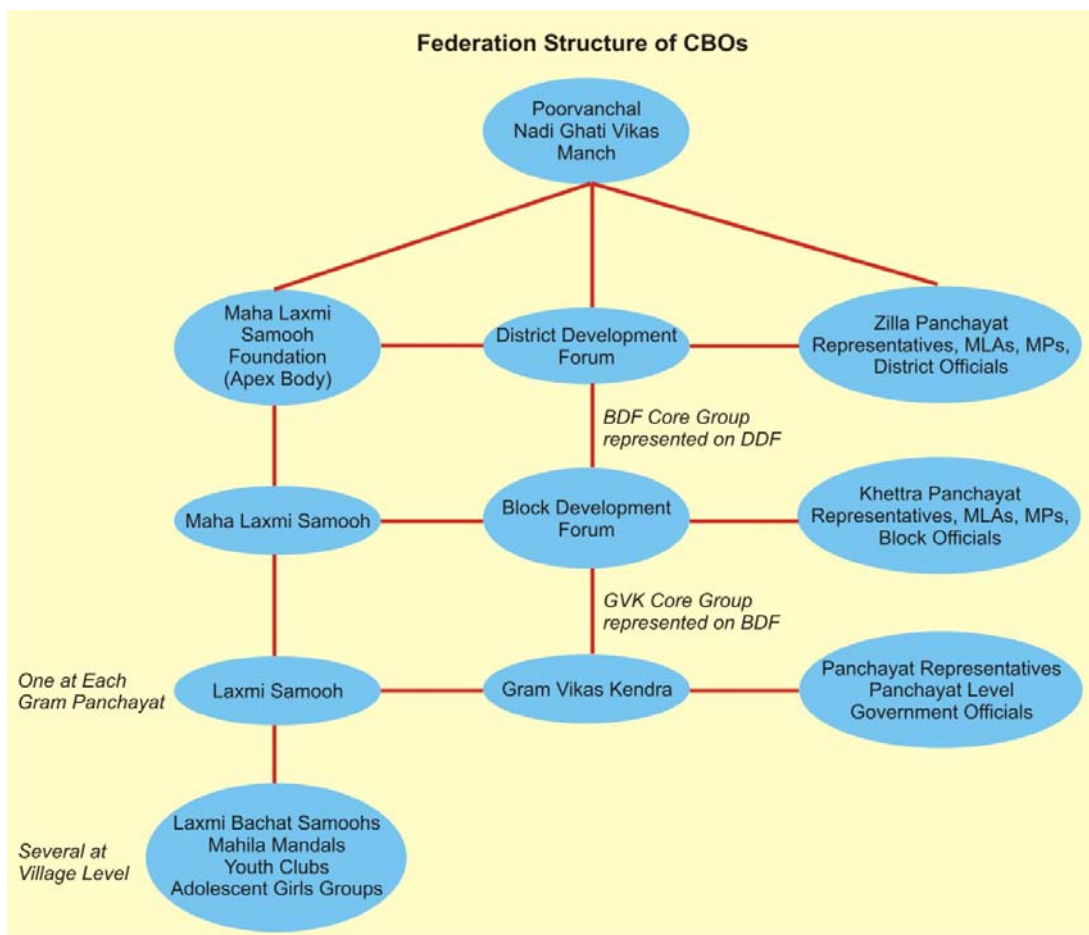
- Self help groups
- Mahila Mandal
- Yuva Mandal
- Adolescent Girls' Groups
- Farmers' Groups
- Disaster Management Groups

The SHGs promoted by the organisation have been given a special name Laxmi Bachat Samooh, on the name of Indian goddess for wealth Laxmi. Most of these groups have all women members, some have all men members and a few have both women and men as members.

Laxmi Bachat Samoohs, coupled other groups promoted by the organisation, are the foundation stone of federation structure of community based organisation as depicted in the graphic on next page. This federation structure has evolved with time.

Generally each village has several Laxmi Bachat Samoohs. Representatives from these groups form Laxmi Samooh at the gram panchayat level and there is one Laxmi Samooh at each gram panchayat. Laxmi Samooh representatives from the community side and panchayat representatives and panchayat level government officials together form Gram Vikas Kendra, which is the body concerned with the development of villages.

Maha Laxmi Samoohs are federated structure at the block level. Two members each from each Laxmi Samooh are represented on Maha Laxmi Samoohs. Representatives of Maha Laxmi Samoohs, Kshetra Panchayat representatives, MLAs, MPs and block officials constitute the Block Development Forum. A core group of Gram Vikas Kendra is also represented on the forum. The Block Development Forum is concerned with the development of the block as a whole.



At the district level, there is Malahaxmi Samooh Foundation, which is a registered body under the Indian Trust Act. Four or five members from each block constitute the Foundation. This organisation and Zilla Panchayat representatives, MLAs, MPs, and district officials form District Development Forum, which is concerned with the district's development. A core group of Block Development Forum is also represented on the District Development Forum.

Finally, one representative each from Mahalaxmi Samooh Foundation, District Development Forum and District Official or District Polity is represented on Poorvanchal Nadi Ghati Vikas Manch, which is the regional body concerned with development issues of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. Almost 20 NGOs working in Eastern Uttar Pradesh are members of the Manch.

3. Livelihood and Environment

Life of most of the residents in the organisation's operational area is dependent on agriculture. People cultivate their own land, share land and lease land. In addition they are also engaged in animal husbandry, agriculture labour, and other agricultural operations.

To make agriculture sustainable, YCK has launched a campaign Cost Effective Sustainable Agriculture. This campaign lays emphasis on environment friendly agricultural practices and includes:

- Enhancing soil strength by use of compost, vermi-compost, matka compost, green manure, etc. Capacity of the farmers in producing these manures is being built upon
- Seed production and conservation, leading to local production of agriculture inputs

- Development of seed bank and grain bank
- Development of cattle bank
- Adoption of socio-economically friendly crop cycle

The community has responded in a big way to the organisation's efforts. Members of Laxmi Samoohs have in collaboration with Laxmi Bachat Samooh developed Laxmi Kisani Kendras.

The Laxmi Kisani Kendras are providing services like sprinkler machines water delivery pipes, winnowing fan, chaff cutter, seeds, manure, agricultural tools, etc., to the community. They are acting as information dissemination centres through farmers' schools, functional literacy and interaction centre for progressive farmers. They are also acting as a market hub and making the farmers available seeds, earthworms, mushroom seeds, matka insecticides, plants raised in nursery, etc. They also search market for vegetables and other produce. At the same time they also make available necessary items to the farmers on fair price.

As a result of these efforts, several agri-based micro-enterprises have emerged in the operational area. These include rice mill, jaggery unit,

4. Community Based Disaster Preparedness and Management

The operational area of YCK in Deoria district is situated in a flood zone. Floods negate gains of developmental efforts of not only the organisation, but also of the government. In every instance of flood, relief is extended to the victims so as to minimise the suffering. The relief work is mostly done in collaboration with the government agencies.

Of late the emphasis is on flood preparedness. Under this the following are done:

- Promotion of a common platform of all the groups, that is, federation of groups
- Regular meetings and interaction with federation
- Workshops of disaster preparedness and management

A special mention needs to be made of devastating floods in 1998 in Rudrapur development block. An embankment breached in that year and swirling waters brought with them sand on agricultural fields, rendering the fields unproductive. Appropriate changes in cropping pattern were brought in so livelihood of the farmers was not affected much. Cultivation of vegetables like pumpkin and *parwal* and fruits like melon and watermelon has been promoted. Efforts have also been made to popularise early maturing varieties of rice with a limited success.

5. Preventive Health Education

Residents of the area have poor health status mainly because of ignorance and poverty. As a result they are afflicted with a number of diseases. Many of these diseases can be prevented if preventive steps are taken. The organisation does so by running a programme on preventive healthcare.

Yuva Chetna Kendra intervenes in health sector through:

- Organisation of street plays on health issues
- Health talk to community on local health issues

- Discussion on health issues in meetings of Laxmi Bachat Samooh and groups of young women and men
- Preparation and updating the list of children of age groups 0-5 years and identifying unimmunised and malnourished children
- Preparation and updating the list of pregnant women and motivating them for proper ante natal care
- Training to traditional birth attendants on safe delivery
- Organisation of medical camps

While emphasising on preventive healthcare sight is not lost of curative aspects. Health camps are organised in collaboration with the government health machinery. Seriously ill patients are referred to the district hospital while medicines are distributed among others. Iron tablets, vitamin A tablets and means of family planning are regularly distributed among the people.

6. Strengthening Local Self Governance

Yuva Chetna Kendra recognises panchayats as an ultimate vehicle of people's empowerment. Ever since the present panchayati raj regime came into existence in 1994, YCK is making efforts to strengthen panchayats and enhance participation of the dalits and the deprived sections in them through a number of interventions:

- Awareness generation and sensitisation of weaker sections of society on panchayati raj system
- Listing and profiling of elected panchayat members
- Functional literacy to community based organisations for an active gram sabha
- Meetings with elected women and dalit panchayat members separately
- Training of elected panchayat members
- Strengthening of panchayat committees for efficient planning and implementation
- Leadership development skill to weaker sections
- Exposure visits to successful panchayats

7. Networking and Advocacy

YCK and CBOs promoted by it collaborate with a large number of stakeholders, including government departments, media, academia, other NGOs, for raising issues of the community and seek solutions of their problems. This networking has resulted in several successes.

8. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

A well knitted financial management system exist at Yuva Chetna Kendra. There are a provision for Annual Audit by an Auditor appointed by the organisation. During the last three years' financial position is as under:

| Year | Total Receipts | Total Payments | Balance Sheet |
|---------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 2008-09 | 1892991.66 | 189299.66 | 239688.66 |
| 2007-08 | 2103994.66 | 2103994.66 | 324670.66 |
| 2006-07 | 2532134.16 | 2532134.16 | 199227.66 |

Major Projects

The following are the major projects implemented by YCK:

- Socio-economic empowerment of dalits and deprived
- Revival of Agriculture for Local Economy Development in Eastern UP and Northern Bihar
- Small farmers' development programme
- River basin programme
- Savera project
- Post-flood rehabilitation programme
- Empowerment of the deprived sections

Donors and Linkages

Donors

YCK receives funds from a number of donors:

- Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT)
- Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA)
- Poorest Area Civil Society (PACS) Programme
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)
- Oxfam (India) Trust
- Council for People's Advancement and Rural Technology (CAPART)
- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

Non Government Organisations

- Gorakhpur Environment Awareness Group
- Grameen Development Services
- Shoragarh Environmental Society
- Poorvanchal Grameen Seva Samiti
- Development Alternatives
- Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra etc

Linkages

YCK actively associated with a number of regional and state level networks:

1. Purvanchal Nadi Ghati Vikas Manch
2. Jan Kendrit Vikas Manch
3. Sa-Dhan
4. ENABLER
5. Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Action Network, Lucknow
6. Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Health Association, Lucknow
7. Sahyog, Gorakhpur
8. Consortium on Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihood, East Uttar Pradesh
9. Sahchar