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VOLUME #12



Voices, Vision, & Victory

Celebrating Informal Women Leading Change

This edition celebrates the unstoppable spirit of women shaping India's cooperative and informal sectors. From fifty years of songs that united SEWA women in collective struggle, to grassroots leaders transforming communities today, we explore how women's voices are driving change. We also spotlight the National Conference of Women Cooperators and its alignment with the National Cooperation Policy 2025, underscoring a shared vision for a resilient and equitable future. Take a look at our new podcast episodes along with our activity on social media. Join us as we celebrate the courage, creativity, and leadership of informal women workers building a better tomorrow through their cooperatives.

Here's a glimpse of our work over the past few months!



National Conference 2025

Building A Resilient & Equitable Future National Conference of Women Cooperator

At the National Conference of Women's Cooperatives, held with VAMNICOM in Pune (June 2025), the spirit of breaking boundaries and challenging stereotypes was unmistakable. More than 140 women cooperators from 10 states spoke candidly about the hurdles they face - and, through solidarity, empathy, and a shared determination to succeed, shared some solutions together.

From farming and cleaning to vending, care work, and construction, these enterprises are built on strength, resilience, and adaptability. When policy specialists, government representatives, and practitioners joined the conversation, valuable insights emerged - insights that will shape the future of the cooperative movement. Click below to explore the key learnings.

[Read complete report here](#)



ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL COOPERATION POLICY 2025

When we convened over 140 women cooperative leaders at the National Conference on Women's Cooperatives in Pune, their demands were clear: ease compliance, improve access to finance, recognise women as farmers and entrepreneurs, invest in long-term incubation, and shift the narrative to centre grassroots leadership.

We are encouraged to see these priorities reflected in the newly released National Cooperation Policy 2025. **The policy aligns on:**

- Gender-disaggregated data to make women's contributions visible
- Simplified governance and compliance for cooperatives
- Long-term, affordable finance for cooperative enterprises
- Recognition of women as farmers—not just landowners
- Cooperative-led climate action and circular economy models
- Member-driven education and leadership development
- Digital systems built with and for grassroots cooperatives

For us, **the next step is clear:** implementation with integrity. We will continue to co-create systems and advocate for reforms that truly work for informal women workers and their collectives.



SONGS, WOMEN WORKERS AND COLLECTIVE STRUGGLE

SEWA's Journey Over 50 Years

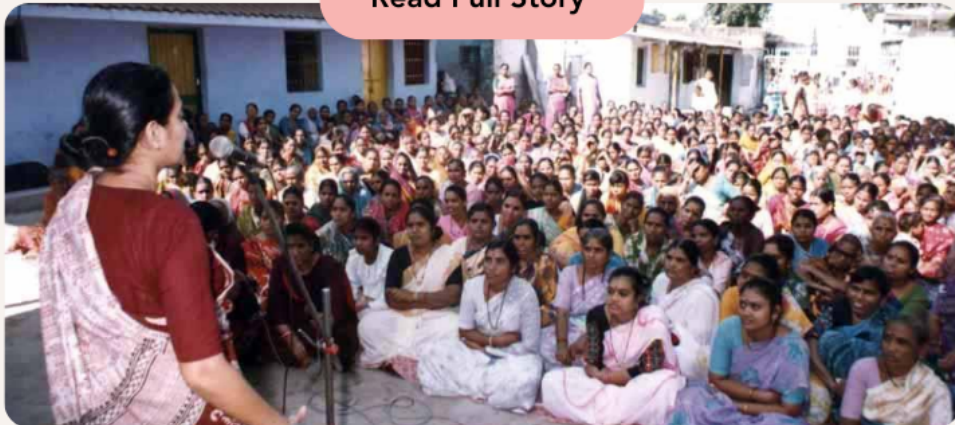
Over SEWA's 50-year journey, songs have been more than music - they have been a tool for organising, healing, and collective action. From village mohalla meetings to cooperative boardrooms, songs have helped women:

- Release grief and share joy
- Understand their rights and livelihoods
- Build confidence to step into leadership roles
- Connect deeply with SEWA's values of self-reliance and solidarity

As members began composing their own songs, music became not just a cultural expression but also a medium of autonomous governance and democratic dialogue.

Rooted in Gandhian tradition of using songs in the freedom movement, SEWA's songs carry forward that legacy - turning collective pain into collective power. Because when women sing together, they organise together. Click below to read this piece.

[Read Full Story](#)





Podcasts



IN SOLIDARITY

A SEWA COOPERATIVE FEDERATION PODCAST

Episode 13

CLIMATE & THE INVISIBLE WORKFORCE

Women, Livelihoods, and Collective Action

In this episode of In Solidarity, we're joined by Dr. Indu Murthy, Senior Principal Research Scientist at CSTEP, where she leads work on climate resilience, sustainability, and environmental policy.

In conversation with

DR. INDU MURTHY

Sector Head - Climate,
Environment and
Sustainability

*Center for Study of Science,
Technology and Policy (CSTEP)*



SEWA ni AWAAZ

Episode 3

WOMEN LED CHILDCARE COOPERATIVES

Padma Hedaoo

Manager, SEWA Sangini Childcare Cooperative



Episode 4

BUILDING INDIA'S FIRST WOMEN-LED INSURANCE COOPERATIVE

Asha Ajmeri

*Chairperson, National Insurance VimoSEWA
Cooperative Ltd.*



[Listen Here](#)

Changemakers in the Making Empowering Grassroots Women Leaders at SEWA

In September 2024, SEWA Cooperative Federation launched a year-long fellowship to strengthen grassroots women's leadership in cooperatives. The first cohort of 16 women leaders from Gujarat is engaging in hands-on learning - from public speaking and governance to financial literacy and enterprise skills - through exposure visits, peer exchanges, and practical training. The fellowship aims to build a network of confident, informed changemakers who can drive collective growth and economic inclusion in their communities. This piece was written for National Cooperative Union of India's The Cooperators magazines' March edition.



[Read Here](#)

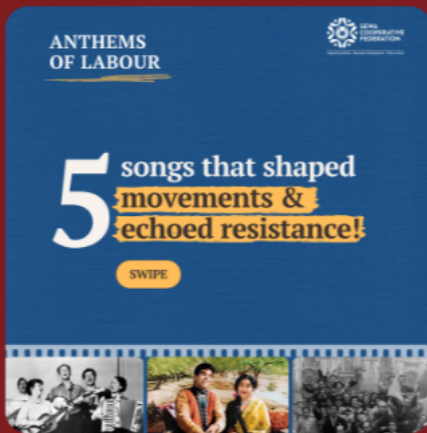
'Everyone's e-commerce': What women's enterprises need from ONDC

In this piece, Semanti Chakladar from our research team writes about how women's informal enterprises face many barriers on the ONDC, such as complex processes and a lack of support. Here's how the platform can improve accessibility.



[Read Here](#)

Our Recommendations Corner



We bring you a curated list of five powerful songs that explore power, protest, and society.

From Italian rice fields to Kentucky's coal mines, these songs tell stories of resilience, labor rights, and the fight for dignity.

[Read Here](#)



Women of SEWA

Meet Shardaben – President, Kheda Mandali in Kheda Taluka, Gujarat.

Shardaben has been a steady, guiding force for the Mandali since its formation in 2011. In 2021, she heavily contributed to its revival, reinforcing its core values and building a stronger foundation for the women farmers it serves.

[Read about her journey](#)

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