

A study based on management of Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021: An Impactful Event on Women Empowerment during Pandemic

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Abstract

Women's empowerment is necessary for family, community, country health and socioeconomic development. Women may realize their full potential in a safe, fulfilling and productive life that contribute to the workforce and help children to become happier and healthier. There are several organizations which do the different types of functions which help to know the women empowerment by its way of working. This review paper discussed about its campaign which is generally alter in rural India and especially for the rural women's life. During the Mela which is organized for rural self-help organizations and artisans on products and design, communication skills, social media advertising and Business-To-Business Marketing. The rural women bring Self-Help Groups (SHGs) on a platform to demonstrate their talents, sell and develop ties with bulk purchasers. These rural SHG women would be able to grasp the demands and tastes of urban clients through participation in Saras Aajeevika Mela. It is an effort undertaken by Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), an initiative organized by the Council for the Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), under the Ministry for Rural Development. In future this type of Mela event will show the powerfully impact on women empowerment during every situation.

Keywords: Rural Development, Saras Aajeevika Mela, Self Help Groups (SHGs), Women Empowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world”, was announced as the subject for International Women's Day on March 8, 2021 (IWD 2021). This topic aims to highlight and commemorate the enormous contributions made by women and girls all across the world in crafting a more egalitarian future and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic[1]. It also corresponds to the priority theme of the Commission on the Status of Women's 65th session. Flagship Generation Equality, the flagship campaign which calls for women's decision-making in all areas, equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and homework, an end to all types of violence, and 'Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, along with elimination of violence, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls[2]. Unfortunately, the levels of

the Asia-Pacific women's representation continue to dip below the worldwide average.

While women representing national parliamentarians increased from 12.7% in 2000 to 19.9% in 2020, the region remains below than the world average of 24.9% in 2020[3]. The emergence of extremists and the subsequent reaction against women in the public sector are all major difficulties, as well as a broader effort to deal with obstacles to women's ability to attain leadership and policy-making[4]. Civic spaces have decreased against this backdrop, and attacks on women in political and public life have increased. The Self Help Groups (SHGs) product marketing is one of the Ministry of Rural Development's most important issues. The Minister of Rural Development supports the organization of exhibitions under the brand name "SARAS" in which SHGs of different countries participate and sell their products in order to

empower rural women and bring them beyond the limit of poverty by having access to better marketing and marketing systems[5].

'Saras Mela' is a remarkable Rural Development Ministry project aimed at offering rural craftspeople a platform to display their qualifications, goods and build a market for themselves [6]. SARAS Mela offers rural producers a valuable chance to sell their goods on large marketplaces, to communicate with customers; to study their likes, preferences and choices and understand them. It therefore assists customers to update and adapt their items, increase marketing abilities and deliver outstanding services while enjoying greater marketing chances[7]. The Mela aims to eradicate middlemen between the craftspeople and the local buyers and ensures to increase the margins for the artisans. SARAS Mela also aims at facilitating and motivating the beneficiaries of Self Help Groups (SHGs) supported by Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) scheme of Ministry of Rural Development, to exhibit and sell their products and to provide them with an opportunity for additional income, exposure and interaction on a large scale[8].

To fulfill the above purposes, Ministry of Rural Development and National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj has been organizing SARAS fairs at Delhi/National Capital Region in various occasions. This exhibition-cum-sale under the brand name of 'SARAS' has brought to its audiences a wide range of products handcrafted by the rural artisans, craftsmen and beneficiaries of Self Help Groups (SHGs) promoted by DAY-NRLM from all over the country[9].

'SARAS-Aajeevika Mela' is an endeavor by the DAY-NRLM to offer farmers a national platform and the chance to display their product and to search for national/international consumers, whether individuals or bulk purchasers. The products range from handlooms, artifact, handicrafts, and heritage product, tribal ornaments, metallic products, decorative items, earthen utensils, organic food item, paintings, spices, brass, processed food product, utility items, soft toys and wrought iron products and

many other exclusive items. Live demonstrations were conducted at the SARAS Aajeevika Mela to expose the public to the delights of the creation and familiarize them with the process of craft production[10]. The Mela has also created an opportunity to the general public to understand the various programs and initiatives of the Ministry of Rural Development through the Information Centre and multiple International Electro technical Commission (IEC) initiatives of the Ministry.

Cultural programs were also arranged as a part of the Mela on every evening including performances by women artists from various states to attract general public and entertain people who visited the Mela venue. The Ministry offered numerous workshops for women participants to improve their knowledge of soft products, packaging skills, consumer management, etc. throughout the Mela[11]. Aajeevika India Food Court was set up by the Ministry through Kudumbashree, the State Poverty Eradication Mission of Kerala, which offered cuisines from 10 states during the Mela.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Meenakshi Sharma explained about in order to sustain the current caste systems, Dr. Ambedkar mobilised the women to fight against the oppression meted out by caste and gender hierarchy. There's little doubt that Ambedkar understood that women must become torchbearers of the new reformed, class-free society. In Manusmriti, Manu propagated a master-slave relationship between men and women. This achievement was only possible by freeing females from the restrictions imposed on them by the prevailing Brahmanical social system, which viewed them as submissive to men and totally dependent on their male counterparts. A woman in Manu's mind was a subhuman creature in need of strict supervision by her male family members. There are several reasons why it was necessary to govern a woman in this way. It is possible for women to undermine caste purity by reproducing outside of their own. To maintain caste purity, their ideological repression becomes vital. To achieve this goal, many ritualistic tools have to be put in place[1].

Rupita explained about Parents of PKK members in Sungai Bundung Laut Village, Sungai Kunyit District, and Mempawah Regency command the Small Business Group Usaha Bersama. During the Covid-19 epidemic, this entrepreneurial organisation enables women in the area to produce fabric masks and disinfectants. As a group, we produce masks and disinfectant solutions after receiving training from a local official. This research employs a descriptive qualitative technique, with interviews and observations providing the primary data. Next, secondary data is collected by reviewing internet news, scientific publications and books for secondary data sources. Die Studie legt besonderen Wert auf den emancipatory process, in which people take charge of their own destiny. As a result of the findings of this study, it is clear that this Covid-19 epidemic mostly affected the poorer levels of society. As a result, in order to maintain their economic stability, these families turned to the manufacture of disinfectants and the fabrication of cloth face masks. During the Covid-19 epidemic, all of their sales were made to sustain the household economy. Die Gemeindegruppen am Dorf Sungai Bundung Laut have die Angst vor Covid-19 überwunden. During the Covid-19 epidemic, all of their sales were made to sustain the household economy. In addition, this business organisation provides a method of strengthening the community through small business. Local social capital is needed to empower this group[8].

Toma Deb Nath discussed about Women's empowerment in organic farming has been identified as one of the major elements. Chiang Mai province was selected as the research region. In this research region, organic farming is actively practised by women. 100 women certified organic producers were surveyed between February and March 2019. They conducted semistructured interviews with eight (8) respondents with a minimum of 25 years of farming experience. We used descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis to examine the data. There was a medium degree of empowerment among responders in organic farming. A positive connection was found between empowerment and age, education,

agricultural experience, organic farming expertise, and engagement in income-generating activities among 10 socio-economic variables. Women's empowerment was shown to be strongly influenced by their age, education and agricultural experience, according to R² (84 percent). Educating women, increasing their knowledge of agriculture and marketing skills, altering their cultural attitudes, and participating in economic activities were recognised as significant elements in empowering women in organic farming. All these elements must be considered by policymakers and development practitioners in order to create and suggest an effective programme to increase women's empowerment[12].

Research Question:

1. What is the impact of Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 and how it can be successfully organised?
2. What are the importance of women Empowerment and need for such events?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Preparations:

The Rural Livelihoods Division of Ministry of Rural Development and National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) (an autonomous body under the Ministry of Rural Development) were entrusted the task of organizing SARAS Aajeevika Mela, 2021. RL Division of MoRD formed a Core Committee including officers from NIRDPR to take various decisions regarding organizing this event. Apart from the Core Committee, Product Screening Committee for screening of Products and SHGs, Physical Verification Committee for verification of items of Event Management Agency, A Sub Committee for verification of items used in Food Court and a Committee for verification of IEC Items used for Publicity of the Event were also formed.

Noida Haat, an initiative and project of Noida Authority, Government of Uttar Pradesh is being professionally managed through their Nodal Agency M/S International Trade & Exhibitions (ITE) India Pvt. Ltd. The proposal for organizing the SARAS Aajeevika Mela at Noida Haat was

forwarded to RL Division of MoRD by Noida Authority[13].

The Ministry decided to invite all States/UTs across the nation for installation of 150 Stalls for women SHG members, who are beneficiaries under DAY-NRLM scheme of Ministry of Rural Development. In addition, the Ministry also decided to invite Kudumbashree, the state poverty eradication mission of Kerala, to install 17 food stalls from various states across the country at the India Food Court. The Mela timing for the visitors was kept from 11.00 AM to 08.00 PM and the food court was open up to 10.00 PM.

3.2 Online Registration:

Instructions were issued to all SRLMs (State Rural Livelihood Mission) to send the nominations of SHGs through Online Registration Portal (<http://nrlm.gov.in>). The online registration system was made mandatory for all states to bring more transparency and stall distribution was also taken care through the portal. NIRDPR-Delhi Branch formed two teams for registration and look after day to day grievances of artisans of respective States

through control room. The teams functioned under their respective team leaders and overall supervision of the Joint Secretary, RL Division, MoRD and guidance of other senior officials from the Ministry of Rural Development and Control Room of NIRDPR NIRDPR-Delhi Branch[14]. The registration teams were also assigned the task of registration of Food Court artisans of the India Food Court, BC Sakhi, Patrakar Didi, CRPs etc. The teams verified the recommendations received from the States/UTs through the online registration portal along-with proof of identification for their registration and issued exhibitor passes to the artisans. Stalls were allotted to the recommended SHGs according to their categorization. The details of SHGs verified by the State Coordinators and subsequently cross verified by the registration teams[15]. All the participants and their stalls were monitored through the State Coordinators, who were nominated by the concerned States and also by the staff deputed on duty by both NIRDPR-Delhi Branch and MoRD. The details of the stall allotment state wise are given in the Table 1 provided below”.

Table 1: The details of the stall allotment state wise are given in the table provided below.

S. No.	States/UTs	Total no. of Stalls
A. States		
1	Andhra Pradesh	5
2	Bihar	8
3	Chhattisgarh	6
4	Goa	2
5	Gujarat	6
6	Haryana	6
7	Himachal Pradesh	6
8	Jharkhand	5
9	Karnataka	4
10	Kerala	7

11	Madhya Pradesh	8
12	Odisha	6
13	Punjab	5
14	Rajasthan	8
15	Tamil Nadu	5
16	Telangana	8
17	Uttarakhand	6
18	Uttar Pradesh	10
19	West Bengal	8
Total		119
B. North East States/UTs		
1	Arunachal Pradesh	1
2	Assam	2
3	Jammu & Kashmir	2
4	Manipur	2
5	Meghalaya	2
6	Mizoram	1
7	Tripura	1
8	Ladakh	2
Total		13
Total (A)		132
B. VIP Reference/Others		
1	FDRVC	4
2	VIP Stalls	6
3	SARAS Gallery	2
4	RSETI	5
5	Others	8
6	BC Sakhi/Patrakar Didi	1

7	Bank	3
Total (B)		29
C. India Food Court		
1	Kudumbashree	17
Total (C)		17
Grand Total (A to C)		178

As per the reporting of the registration team, Nagaland, Maharashtra, Puducherry and Sikkim has not participated in the Mela. For optimum utilization of the available space, necessary re-allotment of vacant stalls have been made by the separate committee constituted for this purpose.

3.3 Inauguration:

The SARAS Aajeevika Mela-2021 was inaugurated by Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development along with Shri Kailash Choudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare on 26th February, 2021 at 05.00 PM at Noida Haat. Shri Nagendra Shri Narendra Singh Tomar. Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development inaugurated the Event Nath Sinha, Secretary, MoRD, Dr G. Narendra Kumar Director General, smt. Alka Upadhyaya, Additional Secretary, MoRD, Shri Charanjit Singh, JS (RL), MoRD, Smt. Leena Johri, JS (Skills) MoRD, Shri R. P. Singh Director (RL), MoRD and Lighting of Lamp by Shri Narendra Singh Tomar. Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development other senior officers from MoRD and from various other spheres were present during the event. The cultural troops of Noida Haat had performed regional dances before the Hon'ble guests and spectators during the inaugural function. After the inaugural function, Hon'ble MRD visited the stalls Lighting of Lamp by Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, Director General, NIRDPR during inaugural function and interacted with the artisans[16].

3.4 Categorization of Stalls:

To display the diversity of our country and varieties of similar items at a single location, it was decided to categorize the stalls under three categories i.e. Natural Food, Handloom and Handicraft Items[17]. During the planning phase itself, State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLMs) were advised to send their recommendations under these three categories. Stalls allocated under Handloom were displayed in Block A, Front of Block B, Front of Block C, & E Block[12]. Handicraft Items were displayed in the back of Block B, Back of Block C and D Block. The Natural Food items were displayed in Block F. India Food Court stalls managed by Kudumbashree were installed at Food Pavilion of Noida Haat. The proper indications were made to help the visitors of the Mela for a hustle free shopping experience and encouraged the public to visit the stalls.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The present study is focused on one of such fairs called - 'SARAS Aajeevika Mela-2021' organized by, NIRDPR and Ministry of Rural Development at Noida Haat, Noida, Uttar Pradesh from 26th February to 14th March, 2021, in which around 150 women SHGs from 27 states/Union Territories of the country participated for exhibition and Entrance Gate of SARAS Aajeevika Mela at Noida Haat sale of their products.

4.1. Special Attractions of SARAS Aajeevika Mela-2021:

4.1.1. Handloom:

Kalamkari, leather lamp sheds, painting and wood craft of Andhra Pradesh; Mehkla chadar from Assam, Cotton and Silk Sarees from Bihar, Kosa Sarees from Chhattisgarh, Bharat Gunthan and Patch work from Gujarat, Tasar Silk and Cotton from Jharkhand, Dupatta and Dress Materails from Jharkhand, pashmina shawls of Jammu & Kashmir, dress materials, woolen shawls and jackets from Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh; hand crafted jutties, Ilkal from Karnataka, chanderi & Bagh print material of Madhya Pradesh, Eri Products from Meghalaya, Tasar and Banda from Odisha, mojerries, leather items of Rajasthan, Kanchipuram from Tamil Nadu, Pochampalli from Telangana, Pashmina from Uttarakhand, bed sheets and cotton suit of Uttar Pradesh, Katha, Batik Print, Tanth and Baluchari Sarees and dress material from West Bengal[18].

4.1.2. *Handicraft:*

Pearl Jewellery from Andhra Pradesh, bamboo art, water hyacinth products and yoga mats from Assam; Lac bangles, madhubani paintings and sikki crafts from Bihar; bell metal products from Chhattisgarh; decorative items from Goa and Uttar Pradesh, mud mirror work and dori work from Gujarat; metal art, terracotta item, artifacts from Haryana; artificial flower art from North East; jewelry from Karnataka; sabai grass products and patachitra on palm leave from Odisha; dokra craft, sitalpatti, jute hand bags and diversified products from West Bengal; tribal jewellery from Jharkhand.

4.1.3. *Natural Food Items:*

Natural spices, naturally grown, free from pesticides, green products across States like spices, ginger, coffee, tea, pulses, rice, millets products, medicinal plants products, coffee, papad, apple jam, pickles, Gram flour, rice, cashew nut, organic pulses, rice, organic vegetables and spices, honey from Punjab, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Kerala and Uttarakhand etc.

4.2. *FDRVC RSETI Stalls:*

Four Stalls were also installed by Foundation for Development of Rural Value Chains (FDRVC) for sale of the products of the SHGs associated

with them[19]. Five Stalls were also installed by Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) (DDU-GKY Division of MoRD) for sale of the products and also to provide the information related to their skill development programmes.

4.3. *Stalls for Banks:*

Three stalls were allotted for Banks i.e. One for Indian Bank, One for Punjab National Bank and one for State Bank of India. Three Mobile Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Vans were also installed at Noida Haat, as illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Photographic view of Mobile ATM of Indian Bank installed at Noida Haat.

4.4. *India Food Court:*

Kudumbashree the state poverty eradication mission of Kerala, installed 17 food stalls from various states across the country at the India Food Court to showcase the diversity of India's ethnic cuisines from nearly 10 States prepared and served by SHG members which is shown in Figure 2[20]. The timing for the Aajeevika food court was open from 11.00 AM up to 10.00 PM. One transgender SHG from Kerala has installed a fresh juice stall in the food court. The food stalls were observed to be great success from the crowd seen inside the food court and the sales reported from the stalls. During the 17 days of the Mela, the India Food Court earned a total sale of around 36, 26,590.00 (Thirty Six Lakh Twenty Six Thousand Five Hundred Ninety).



Figure 2: Photographic view of India Food Court to showcase the diversity of India's ethnic cuisines from nearly 10 States prepared and served by SHG members.

5. Attendance and Billing:

Daily Attendance of Artisans and billing of sold products were also taken through Mobile App linked with this portal. E-bill was generated for customers and after entering the mobile number, it automatically sends directly to the customers as highlighted in Figure 3[21].



Figure 3: Schematic illustration of Snap of E bill that was generated for customers after sold the products.

6. Flier:

A Flier on SARAS Aajeevika Mela-2021 was prepared covering the details of products brought by the artisans and some selected photographs of the items brought by the SHGs. The fliers were distributed to dignitaries of embassies, key persons in the MoRD, senior officials of other departments for generating publicity and visitors about the Mela. Fliers/Brochures were also kept at Help Desk/Control Room and at Information Centre for distribution to the general public and other visitors of the Mela. This has helped the visitors as a guide in the Mela.

7. Workshop:

Three workshops and one B2B were organized during the event.

7.1. First workshop on “Promotion of Rural Products through eMarketing & Social Media” was taken by Dr. Kaynat Kazi (Renowned Social Media Blogger and Photographer) at Noida Haat on 03/03/2021.

7.2. Second workshop on “Better Designing & Packaging of Rural Products” was taken by Dr. Ritika Agarwal, faculty of NIFT at Noida Haat on 05/03/2021.

7.3. Third workshop on “Sales Communication & Psychology of Buyers” was taken by Dr. Aparna Dwivedi, Senior Journalist at Noida Haat on 09/03/2021.

7.4. Business to Business (B2B) Meeting:

B2B: Ministry and Foundation for Development of Rural Value Chains organized “Buyer and

Seller Meet” with Flipcart, Amazon etc. on 10.03.2021 at Noida Haat under the Chairpersonship of Smt. Alka Upadhyaya, AS

(RD). Shri Charanjit Singh, JS (RL), MoRD elaborated the concept of the above said meet in detail to the participants (as shown in Figure 4).



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Figure 4: Pictures of Organized different workshops and B2B during the event: a) Promotion of Rural Products through eMarketing & Social Media, b) Better Designing & Packaging of Rural Products, c) Sales Communication & Psychology of Buyers and, d) Buyer and Seller Meet.

8. Cultural Programmes:

A highly sophisticated Cultural Hall and stage was constructed at the Mela venue for display of Cultural programmes. Cultural activities were performed by the empanelled artists of Nodal Agency of Noida Haat Authority on every day in

the Mela from 04.00 PM to 08.00 PM shown in Figure 5. This programmes helped to attract a large number of public to the venue for their entertainment. This has been observed as a unique event especially for the general public in the entire Mela. Since large number of visitors enjoying these live performances; this also acts as a publicity avenue for SARAS[22]. The empanelled artists of Noida Haat performed variety of programmes such as folk dances and songs of various states, puppet shows etc. The visitors enjoyed the programme and expressed positive responses on the programmes. They took selfies and videos of the programmes and shared them through social media.



Figure 5: Photographical view of organized culture program artists of Nodal Agency of Noida Haat Authority on every day in the Mela.

9. Visits to Saras Mela:

Hon'ble Minister of State for Rural Development Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti visited mela on 09th March, 2021 at 04.00 PM and other senior officials from MoRD and NIRDPR officials deputed in the Mela. Hon'ble MoS (RD) visited various stalls and interacted with the artisans. The Hon'ble Minister appreciated rural women SHGs for their skill and category of good quality products made by them. Shri Nagendra Nath Sinha, Secretary (Rural Development), visited each stalls and India Food court on 14/03/2021 and commented that Great place for exploring SHG entrepreneurs to urban customers. Variety of products are very high. The quality is reasonably good. We could probably each some labeling and packaging. Let us have a calendar and work with producers so that old to new rates is gradually brought down. Further, in the Mela, improvement of sections and signages can be done. Self-Reliance and Development appreciated the hard work of officials of NIRDPR Delhi Branch.

Dr G. Narendra Kumar Director General, National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) visited the Stalls on 26/03/2021 to take overall review of the preparation of organizing the Mela. During the

visit, he interacted with SHG members and valuable suggestions were given by him for smooth functioning of Mela[23]. While addressing the artisans during inaugural function, he emphasized to work on creating e-marketing platform also for the artisans. Smt. Alka Upadhyaya, Additional Secretary (Rural Development), visited each stalls and India Food court and interacted with Artisans. A number of other dignitaries and distinguished personalities have also visited the SARAS Aajeevika Mela-2021. This includes Cabinet Ministers, Secretary/Other senior level officials from various Ministries, foreigners, Members of Parliament, dignitaries from various fields etc. Many celebrities including Richa Anirudh had also visited the Mela and appreciated the event shown in Figure 6.

A team from Andaman & Nicobar and Cluster Level Federation (CLF) women members from Haryana State Rural Livelihood Mission visited SARAS Mela at Noida Haat for exposure and to share their experiences[24]. They interacted with artisans to understand the entire process of making various products, the features of products and how to sell the products through these Melas and other marketing channels.



(a)



(b)

Figure 6: Visits during the SARAS Aajeevika Mela

9.1. Diplomats Visit:

The Ambassadors/Diplomats of the Country Uganda, Czech Republic, Iceland, Venezuela, Papua, New Guinea, Serbia, Latvia, El Salvador, Yemen, Taiwan, Indonesia, Cambodia, United States of America and Tajikistan visited the Mela on 12.03.2021 and appreciated the event.

10. Information Centre:

With the objective of generating awareness of various schemes and programmes of Ministry of Rural Development, an Information Centre was constructed in the Noida Haat of SARAS Aajeevika Mela[25]. Videos on various schemes/programmes of MoRD were played throughout every day. Attendants were also deputed to address the queries of the visitors and to provide information on the ongoing Mela.

11. Eco-Friendly Carry Bags (Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan):

The SHGs were strictly instructed to avoid use of plastic carry bags during the Mela and directed to use eco-friendly bags only for delivery of items purchased by customers. To promote and inculcate the habit of plastic free Mela, 60,000 eco-friendly carry bags were distributed to the rural artisans during the Mela. This initiative not only helped the artisans during their sales but also it becomes a tool for creating publicity of the

SARAS Mela. Though the bags were distributed evenly among the participants there were repeated demands from the artisans for the bags. It also helped to create awareness among the public to use cloth/eco-friendly bags in place of plastic, polythene bags etc.

12. Distribution of Masks:

All SHGs, visitors and officials were instructed to follow a strict COVID-19 protocol at the SARAS Aajeevika Mela. In order to preventative measure, 5000 masks were distributed to stall holders (artisans), staff, volunteers and other individuals. Instructions were also issued to maintain social distancing. Sanitizer dispenser and regular sanitization was also implemented within the Mela premises.

13. Health Desk:

During the Mela, a Health desk was set up with ambulance on standby for any emergency services for providing medical facilities.

14. Reporting of Sales:

A team including members of National Informatics Centre division was constituted to record day to day sale of each stall in coordination with the respective State Coordinators. CRPs from Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Telangana State were also assigned to record the sales and assist & train the artisans on online activities. The

total sale reported in 17 days comes to Rs. 3.83 Crore from all the stalls including India Food Court.

15. Inventory Management:

Every day meeting of State Coordinators were taken to manage and maintain inventory of the items brought by the SHGs. The main purpose is to avoid any kind of shortages of materials in the Mela and ensure replenishment immediately. During the meeting, stock was assessed on daily

17. BC Sakhi:

Banking Correspondents (BC) from Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh participated in the event. BC Sakhis facilitated the artisans as well as the Shri Nagendra Nath Sinha, Secretary Rural Development visited the stalls of BC Sakhi with Aadhar Number. The Sakhi verified his biometric authentication with the thumb impression taken on a device and the money is delivered to him. A slip confirming cash withdrawal is issued by the machine.

18. IEC and Media Desk:

The IEC Division of MoRD and Nodal Agency of Noida Haat (ITE) were assigned the task of media and publicity of the event. A press conference was also held on 25/03/2021 for wide publicity of the event. The publicity of the event was Press Conference held on 25/02/2021 carried through radio jingles, newspaper coverage, social media updates, buntings and hoardings at strategic locations etc. Their initiatives helped to create awareness about the Mela and attract public to the Mela. The team of MoRD, NIRDPR and Nodal Agency of Noida Haat also coordinated with various media to visit and cover the Mela for wide publicity of the event. A separate committee was also constituted by RL Division to verify the IEC items/work carried out by the Nodal Agency of Noida Haat as per their proposal.

19. Media Coverage of the Mela:

All activities of the Mela were covered by print and electronic media like AajTak, ABP News, Zee News, Lok Sabha TV, Doordarshan and National & Local newspapers like Dainik Jagran, Hindustan, and Amar Ujala etc. The above team

basis to ensure the proper supply of the items at each Stalls. To keep proper stock of items brought by the SHGs, provision of storage facilities were made at the venue.

16. Patrakar Didi:

Partrakar Didis from Jharkhand working under the DAY-NRLM scheme were invited to the Mela. Patrakar Didis kept their eyes on the Mela and took snaps on important incidents and prepared the newsletter.

visitors to deposit and withdraw cash within the Mela venue. The BC Sakhis managed their task wonderfully during the Mela and generated some income to support their livelihood.

dedicatedly worked throughout the mela. All the officers/officials worked very hard with sincerity and taken care all challenging tasks like implementation of Covid guidelines, lodging and fooding arrangements of artisans, grievances management, coordination with all stakeholders, Very Important Persons and Protocols, Media Management, sales, attendance, workshops, meetings etc. The team put all their efforts, which make the event most successful. Mementos were distributed to the above team of NIRDPR Delhi Branch.

Recently, the Union Minister for Rural Development inaugurated Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 at Noida Haat.

- More than 300 rural self-help groups and craftsmen from 27 states are participating in the Mela. It is a programme to transform rural India in general and the lives of rural women in particular.
- During the Mela, workshops on product packaging and design, communication skills, social media publicity and Business to Business marketing will be organized to educate the rural self-help groups and craftsmen.
- It is an initiative by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) under the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) organized by the Council for Advancement of

People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART).

- CAPART is an autonomous body set up by the Ministry of Rural Development to interface between the government and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) that seek to improve the quality of life in India's rural areas.
- Bringing rural women Self Help Groups (SHGs) on a single platform to show off their abilities, promote their products and assist in building connections to bulk purchasers.
- These rural SHG women will be exposed at a critical national level by participating in SARAS Aajeevika Mela, in order to learn urban clients' requirements and tastes.
- The Mela acts as an integrated approach towards women empowerment.
- The Initiative is well aligned with the government's vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

Two registration teams were created and day after day complaints by tradesmen from the

various States were handled by NIRDPR-Delhi Branch through a control room. The teams worked under the supervision of the Joint Secretary, RL Division, MoRD and other senior officials from the NIRDPR NIRDPR-Delhi Ministry for Rural Development and the Control Room. Registration teams have also been tasked by Indian Food Court craftsmen, BC Sakhi, Patrakar Didi, CRPs, etc., registration of Food Court. The teams reviewed the suggestions received from the States/UTs through their online registration site and confirmed their identity and the exhibitors sent them on to the craftsmen. The suggested SHGs were categorised into stalls. The information of SHGs checked by the National Coordination and then checked by the registration teams. The State Coordinators selected by the States involved, as well as the employees assigned on duty by NIRDPR-Delhi Branch and MoRD, supervised all of the participants and their stations. The state wise allotment shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8 shown the references for the VIP (Very Important Person).

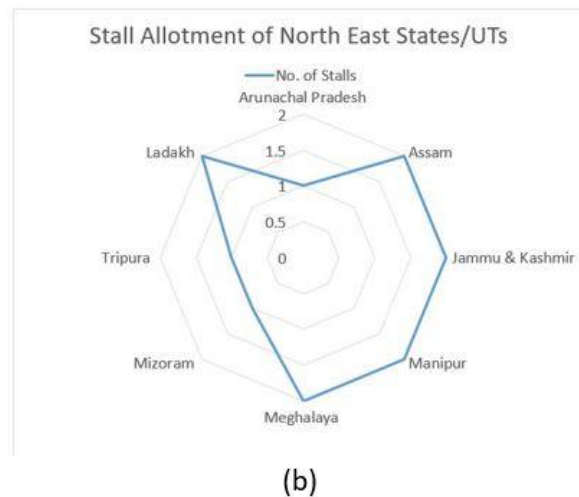
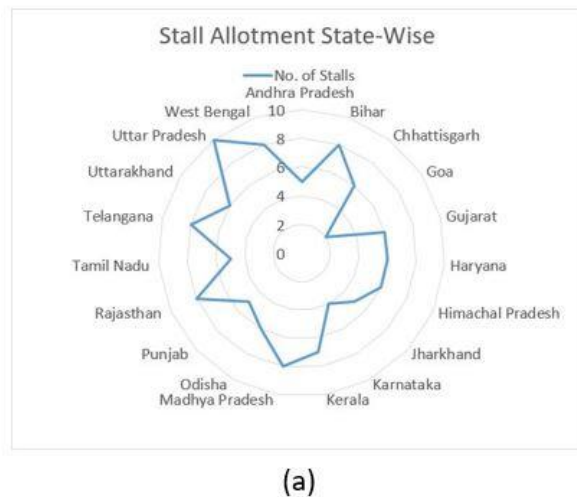


Figure 7: The graphical representation of stall allotment (a) The stall allotment state wise during this function and, (b) The stall allotment of north east states/union territory in this function.

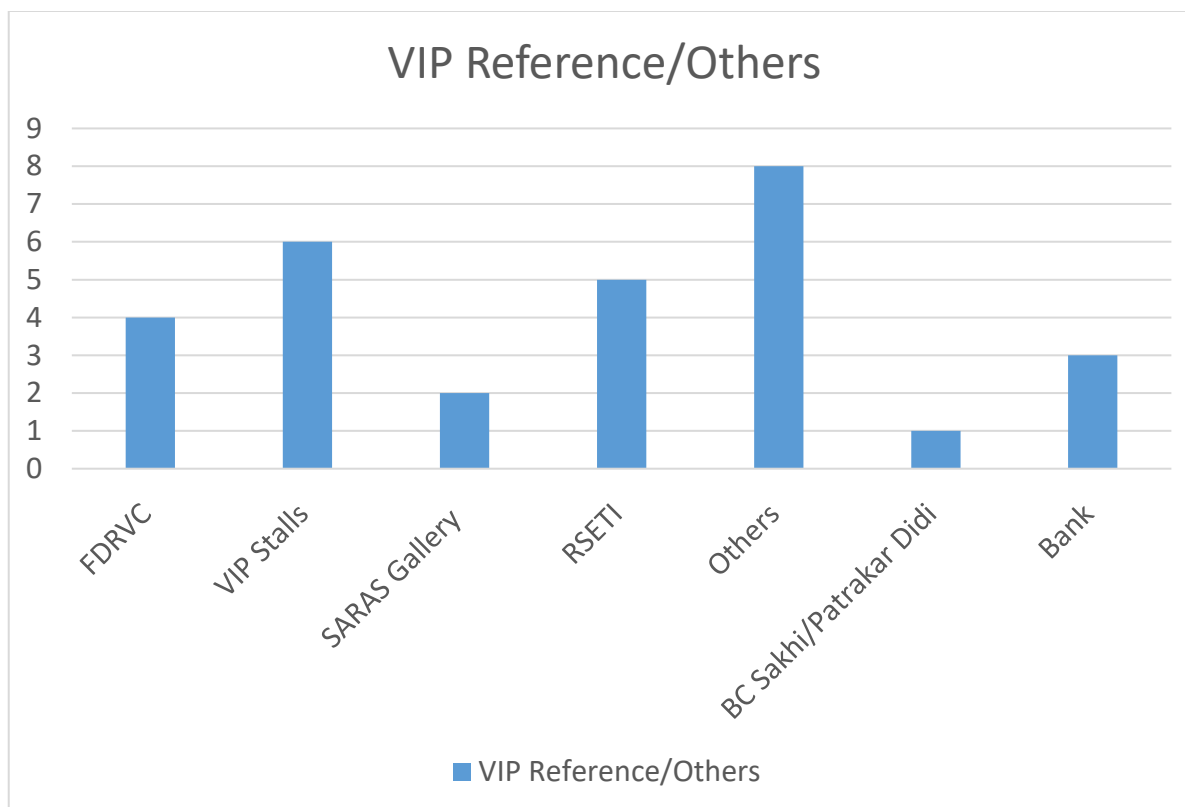


Figure 8: The above graph shows the references for the VIP (Very Important Person).

The success of mela could be marked from the event that Ministry had organized - Self Help Groups (SHGs) Award Function on 8th March, 2021 at Vigyan Bhawan on the occasion of “Women Day”. The Hon’ble Minister of Rural Development Shri Narendra Singh Tomar graced the occasion and around 23 participating SHGs of SARAS Aajeevika Mela (Noida Haat) attended the programme.

1. Certificates:

Certificates acknowledging the participation of the SHGs, Food Court Artisans, State Coordinators, CRP-EPs, BC Sakhis, and Patrakar Didi etc. who participated in the SARAS Aajeevika Mela-2021 were issued during the closing day of the Mela. This will be a record for them regarding their participation in the Mela as well as a souvenir for them.

The above team dedicatedly worked throughout the mela. All the officers/officials worked very hard with sincerity and taken care all challenging tasks like implementation of Covid guidelines, lodging and fooding arrangements of artisans,

grievances management, coordination with all stakeholders, VIPs and Protocols, Media Management, sales, attendance, workshops, meetings etc. The team put all their efforts, which make the event most successful. Mementos were distributed to the above team of NIRDPR Delhi Branch.

5. CONCLUSION

The SARAS Aajeevika Mela-2021 held at Noida Haat, Noida, Uttar Pradesh was a great success and it created an impact among the artisans as well as visitors. The event became very popular among the visitors. The event grabbed the attention of the society due to its strategic location and thereby generated good sales for the artisans who participated in the Mela. The participants/artisans have expressed their satisfaction as they got good sales than their expectation. The visitors also appreciated this initiative. The Mela also helped in publicizing the flagship programmes of Ministry of Rural development especially Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). The online registration of

participants, sales reporting, attendance and generation of e-billing through mobile app were appreciated. In future this type of Mela helpful for the women's because it will help to know the power of women empowerment, that how woman's become the major part of any organization and help to achieving these goals. The SARAS Aajeevika Mela give the impactful reaction on the women empowerment during this pandemic.

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