

## EXPANSION AND COVERAGE

Mahila Samakhya was launched as a pilot project in Karnataka, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh in 1989 with Dutch assistance. The project was extended to Andhra Pradesh at the end of 1992 and in two districts in Kerala in 1998. The effectiveness of the MS strategy in mobilising women for education has resulted in it being adopted by other basic education projects in Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Assam

The Madhya Pradesh programme closed down in 2001. With the end of DPEP funding in Assam, the Assam programme was brought under the National scheme of Mahila Samakhya in 2002. The programme is currently being implemented in a total of 15823 villages spread over 63 districts in 9 states.

Sl.No	State	No. of Districts	No. of villages
1.	Assam	6	1591
2.	Andhra Pradesh	9	2383
3.	Bihar	9	2098
4.	Gujarat	7	1621
5.	Jharkhand	5	2480
6.	Karnataka	9	1566
7.	Kerala	2	221
8.	Uttar Pradesh	12	2765
9.	Uttaranchal	4	1098
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>15823</b>

The average number of villages covered in each district ranges from 150 to 250. In the Xth plan, however, guidelines for number of villages to be covered in a district have been laid. In each district 250 villages are required to be covered in order to achieve a critical mass that could demonstrate impact of the MS strategies.

Since MS is not a service delivery programme the process of mobilization and organization takes time. Women are mobilized into sanghas whose regular membership ranges from 25- 40. This figure refers to the women who meet regularly once or twice in a month. It must be noted that many other women also participate in the activities of the sangha depending on the nature of issue or activity being addressed. There is a wider ripple effect on the families of the sangha women as well as the community. Initially women from the poorer sections of the sanghas are organized. As sanghas gain recognition and visibility in the village, they have begun to draw in women from other social groups as well.