

SURAJE

INTRODUCTION

SURAJE is a non political, non religious and non profit organization, which works towards societal upliftment and actions for rural empowerment in the 8 blocks of Kaimur and Rohtas districts, in Karghar, Bihar.

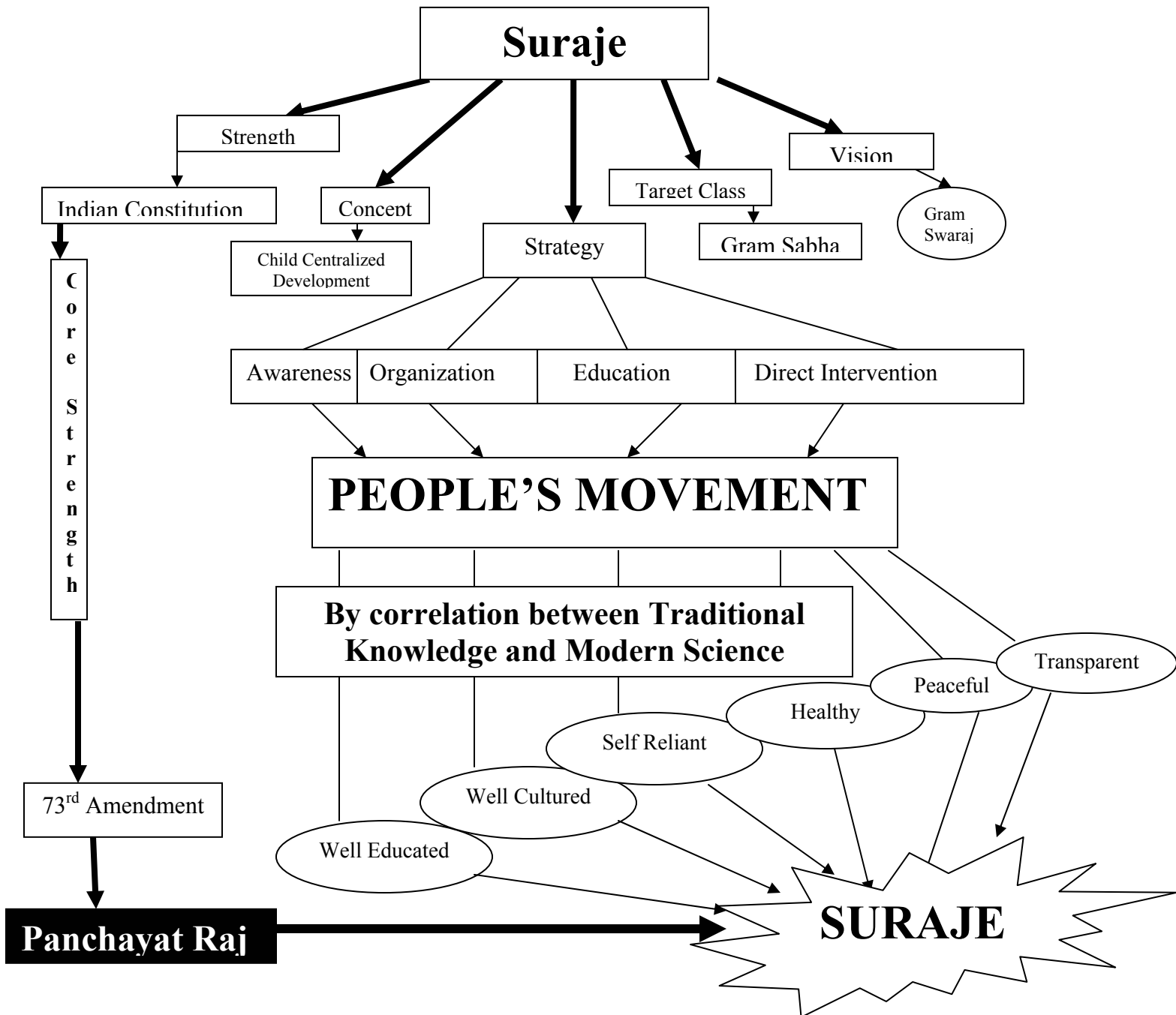
Our thoughts are based on the Gandhian philosophy and therefore, we stress the importance of self reliance. The list of our present activities includes:

- School Education to Rural Girls (SERG), who are away from the mainstream of education.
- Women's Empowerment: Formation of Self Help Groups, Training of groups, Bank Linkage, Liaison with Government, Organization of Bihar Mahila Sangh through which we made a sincere effort to organize and mobilize the mass movement to inspire them at every stage of livelihood.
- Micro credit to Women SHG members with RGVN (Patna), DRDA (Rohtas) and trying our best to strengthen GRAMYA as a District Resource Centre for SHG.
- Action against child labor, Trafficking and exploitation; with South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude under the banner of BACHPAN BACHAO ANDOLAN.
- Programmes of Social Security of Laborers of unorganized sector.
- Innovative Programmes in Agriculture.

- Running CRECHE and Awareness Generation on the 5 issues of Child Care Services i.e. Birth Registration, Immunization, Nutrition, Maternity Benefit and Pre Primary Education.
- AIDS Awareness Programme under TI of Project BSACS, Patna.
- Formation of Model Panchayat under UNICEF (Bihar), on the issue of Birth Registration.

Our target groups for the above mentioned activities are the women and children, laborers of unorganized sectors, rural artisans, truckers, CSWs, MSMS and IDUs. To ensure an effective delivery in the interior and inaccessible villages, our organization has a competent core team consisting of social workers, teachers, trainers, with experts in the areas of SHG and Micro Finance Panchayat Raj and Agriculture. Besides these, there are a good number of volunteers who are available when they are required to carry out the activities of the development sector.

The schematic representation of our organization would look like:



Suraje

Strength

Vision

Indian Constitution

Concept

Target Class

Gram Swaraj

Child Centralized Development

Strategy

Gram Sabha

C
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Awareness

Organization

Education

Direct Intervention

PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

By correlation between Traditional Knowledge and Modern Science

Transparent

Peaceful

Healthy

Self Reliant

Well Cultured

Well Educated

73rd Amendment

Panchayat Raj

SURAJE

VISION STATEMENT

To build up a new society based upon the values of equality, freedom, justice and fraternity; independent of discrimination on the ground of caste, religion and sex; wherein none remains illiterate, diseased and hungry.

MISSION STATEMENT

To invigorate and upgrade the neglected and downtrodden people of the society by awareness, organization, education and providing micro loans at lower interests through the process of participatory development and to raise their social, economical, cultural and moral status, so that none is devoid of main stream of new construction of the Nation.

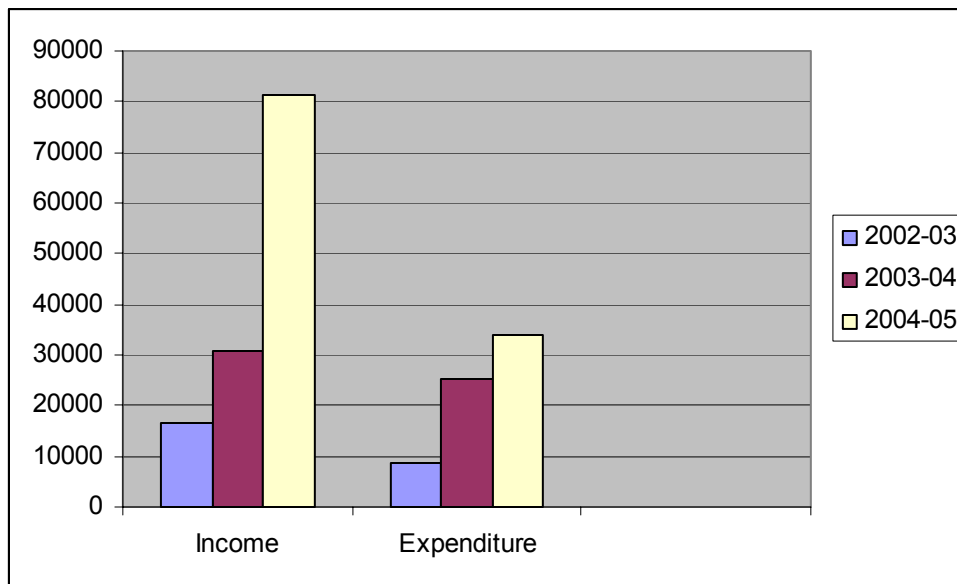
HISTORY

SURAJE, established in 1981, started within a small mud dwelling of five rooms without proper infrastructure, by Bipin Bihari Sinha. The aim was to bring about a Child Centric Development, with a particular emphasis on girls.

SURAJE's journey began by imparting education to the rural girls. Later on, we added 2 other objectives on our priority list: health and socio-economic development of the rural society. Today, we are the single leading organization, in micro finance, in the areas where we operate.

Our organization faced the resource crunch in the initial years, yet made some striking achievements. It has now established itself as an organization which has advocated the cause of the target groups for more than two decades.

The growth experience of our organization can be seen from the increase in income and expenditure in the three year period from 2002-03 to 2004-05. This is given in the graph below:



OUTREACH

At present, there are 6 blocks of Rohtas district and 2 blocks of Kaimur district under our areas of operation. We deliver the following programmes for their welfare:

EDUCATION

Our organization realizes the importance of education. So, since the time of initiation, our primary focus has been on education, especially for girls. Thakur Rabindra Nath took the efforts to

educate the girls. This school is now run by his wife. Although there is a lack of proper infrastructure, this did not demotivate the organization's members. Around 150 girls are enrolled here. Education is imparted from class 5 to 10, only to girls.



Apart from providing formal education, the organization also provides vocational education. This is required for the development of skills and also to make the girls self dependent. It includes tailoring, embroidery and preparing of food.

Initially, girls, in the areas where this organization operates, were not sent to school but the situation has now changed.

CHILD CARE SERVICES

a) Action against Child Labor, Trafficking and Exploitation of 6-14 years of age

The objectives of this programme are:

- To check child labor and trafficking.
- To enroll each child in school and take them to the mainstream of education.

- To mobilize and sensitize District Administration, Media, PRIs, General people and Class of Intelligential.
- To create a healthy atmosphere in favor of children.
- To accelerate Poverty Alleviation Programmes and Rural Development Programmes.



To achieve these objectives, we undertook the following activities in the year 2004-05:

- State level workshop at Sasaram Town High School on 10th July 2004
- District level workshop on 26th and 27th July 2004
- Voters' Awareness Campaign during general elections 2004 and Assembly elections 2005
- Education week in favor of girls

- Awareness generation in the district of Rohtas through cultural Programmes in form of cultural team named Mukti Karvan
- Enrollment Campaign during which 435 out of school going children were enrolled through our efforts
- Rally, Dharna and Procession
- Formation of Bal Mitra Panchayat

b) Crèche

With regard to the children between 0-3 years of age, we hold that pre-primary education must be imparted to them. So, a crèche was started at village Khanej (Siwan Gram Panchayat) on 1st Mat 2004, in which 25 kids in between 0-6 years of age are present. Herein, the kids are taught using the mode of fun. The dictum of the education is 'roti, khel, padai aur pyar'. Also, efforts were made to create awareness among parents for Birth Registration, Immunization and Nutrition for these children. In the year 2003-04, level of awareness was negligible. But the year after this saw a massive improvement.

HEALTH

These districts, Kaimur and Rohtas, are extremely backward and lack infrastructure. There are no proper roads. Due to this, it becomes impossible for the people in these areas to avail the facilities in the town. Moreover, there is a lack of trained doctors and nurses. So, in the time of need, the hapless patients have nowhere to go. Therefore, health is a matter of concern and around 60% of the funds are used up in this field.

The organization took up many Reproductive and Child Health Programmes. Different programmes and activities for creating awareness among the target groups were undertaken. This will mainly target the pregnant women and children and the emphasis will be on Nutrition, Immunization and feedback on the Pre and Post Natal Care.

SURAJE also focused on the problems of AIDS which is widely prevalent in its area of operations particularly on NH2 (GT ROAD) from Khurmabad to Dehri-on-Sone. There are at least 20 villages of commercial sex workers adjacent to this road. The affected group consists of truckers, M.S.Ms, IDUs and migrants.

The staff, of the organization, associated with the target to create awareness about the dreadful disease, AIDS, befriends those in the affected group at the halt points, mainly dhabas. They apprise them about the threats associated with AIDS, encourage them for safe sex by promoting among them the use of condoms and also by extending the treatment for STD patients among the target group. Apart from this, the organization also provided the counseling services among the target group.

Our self evaluation is that myths are breaking gradually. General awareness among the people is increasing. Statistically,

- Condom distribution-65540
- STD Patients treated-110
- Counseling Services Provided-234
- STD Patients referred-110

SELF RELIANCE PROGRAMMES

a) Micro Credit

Another role played by this organization is in the area of micro-finance. The target groups realized that through micro-financing they could set up small enterprises, enhance their earnings and pay back the loans without falling into any debt-trap, such as the ones set by traditional moneylenders. The target groups can now take loans without the need of providing any security, unlike the case with banks. This has done a lot of good to the local poor as it went a long way to create a positive attitude among them and help them adapt to the sea change that will greatly boost the growth of the rural economy.

The micro-finance ran through the number of SHGs which mainly comprised of the rural women folks. The SHGs will start through the internal loaning and the SHGs will fully be entrenched into loaning/credit business after three months of the start. The members of these SHGs will mostly be from the same caste, same village and will have similar economic background. The SHGs have to qualify under the group quality test. The loans and the credit were mostly taken for the productive purpose. Most of the members were agriculturists and will take loan for buying seeds, fertilizers and for taking the fields on lease.

Other details regarding the SHGs are represented in the table below:

S.No	SHG Programme	No. (Year 2004-05)
1	No. of groups	74
2	No. of members	1063
3	New groups	17

	organized	
4	No. of groups organized under SGSY	33
5	Bank accounts opened	06
6	One day monthly workshops of group leaders	12

b) Livelihood Promotion

Our organization believes in the Gandhian philosophy. So, the livelihood promotion is an important role that we perform. Under this programme, we undertook the following activities in the year 2004-05:

- 30 women were trained in manufacturing of lac bangles with the help of NABARD under Rural Entrepreneurship Development Programme. Trained women have started production.
- Market survey was done by trained ladies.
- A stall was organized at District town Sasaram on 21st Nov 2004 on the occasion of Exhibition organized by Bank of Canara. The stall of lac bangles became and remained the centre of attraction from the beginning to last.
- We are trying for Bank Linkages.

STRATEGIES

In order to make sure that the delivery mechanism is effective i.e. the efforts reach the target group in time, our organization

has developed a competent core team of Social Workers, Teachers, and Trainers; with experts in the area of SHG and Micro Finance, Panchayat Raj and Agriculture. Besides these, there are a good number of volunteers who are available when their services are required. In order that our staff performs efficiently, we have training programmes from time to time.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our labor and sweat did not go in vain. In each field where we operated, we have been able to bring out impressive results. In brief, the following have been our achievements in the year 2004-05:

a) With regard to the Model Panchayat Programme, wherein the parents are informed about the 5 basic issues-birth registration, immunization, nutrition, maternity right and pre primary education, the following have been achieved by us:

- 128 meetings with rural people in which 2111 people participated
- 16 meetings of Mothers' Committee
- Door to Door visit wherein we visited 140 houses
- Advocacy with Panchayat Sewaks Health workers, Angan Bari Staff, Members of PRIs and Government Officers
- Organized a district level workshop at Seminar Hall of District Board, Rohtas on 23rd July 2004 in which 102 people participated

b) Our achievements in the programme called 'Action against Child Labor and Exploitation' are:

- Organization of Bal Mitra Panchayat
- 100% enrollment of Children of the village in School
- Reorganization of Balmitra Gram Kuriyari by respective Gram Panchayat
- Dropout rate less than 1%
- Active Bal Mukhiya who has been selected for National Bal Maha Panchayat
- Better arrangements of Scholarship, Mid day meal and Angan Bari

c) Last but not the least, we have made some remarkable achievements in the 'Reproductive and Child Health Programme':

- Successful advocacy to organize NSV Camp in the district. This programme became first in Bihar
- 162 pregnancies were identified and were provided special care on Nutrition, Immunization and feedback on Pre and Post Natal Care, by regular interaction
- 140 meetings were organized with Target Groups through which 1877 couples and 331 adolescent were awarded on pre and post natal care, balanced food, immunization, child care, pre marriage preparation, physical and mental changes during adolescence, STIs, HIV and other related issues. We try our best to introduce scientific thinking and to break myths

RESOURCE PROVIDERS

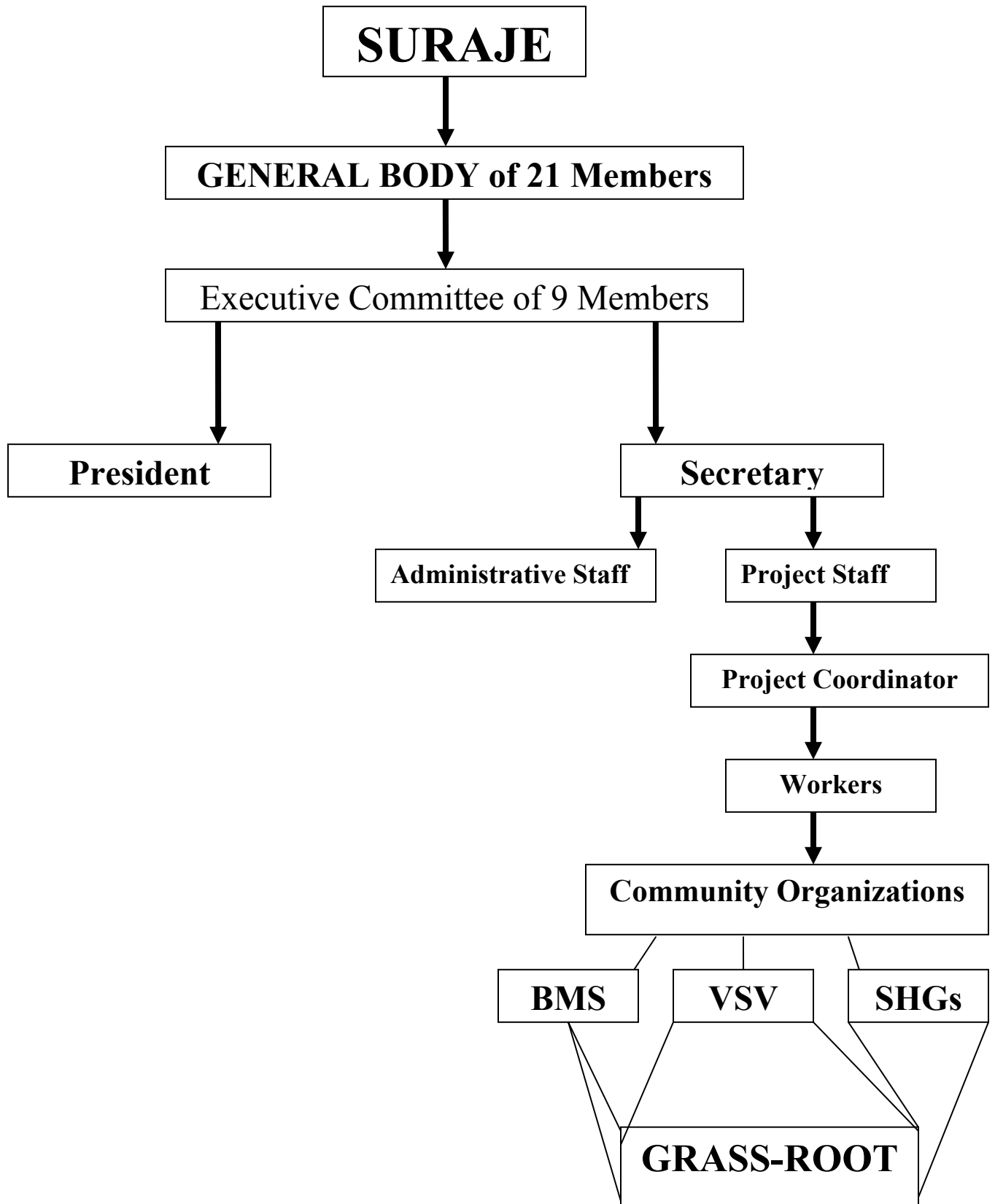
As a team, we have succeeded in achieving the desired direction in all the fields where we operate, though we still have a long way to go. All this has been possible due to the consistent support we received from our funders. The following funding agencies deserve appreciation:

- Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi, Patna
- Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India through Adithi
- Bihar AIDS Control Society, Patna
- NOVIB, Netherlands through Bihar Forces/Nidan, Patna
- NABARD, Patna
- National Forces, New Delhi

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Our organization was started with Bipin Bihari Sinha as the chairperson and Thakur Rabindra Nath as the secretary, apart from 7 other active members. The administrative structure comprises of the general body with 21 members and the executive committee with 9 members. The main functionaries are president and secretary. The secretary forms the pivot of all the activities, with all the project staff and the administrative workers under him.

If represented using a flow chart, the structure of our organization would look like:



CONCLUSION

In over 2 decades, SURAJE has become a common name in the area and has virtually redressed a number of social problems prevailing in its area of operations. Still we have a long way to go. Some major challenges posed in front of us are:

- To become a leading organization with respect to Micro Finance activities
- To change the behavior as enjoying single faithful partner, habit of using condoms
- Regular use of disposable Syringes
- To check the spread of HIV
- To prepare a fully aware and healthy atmosphere in favor of PLHAs
- To prepare target group to make habit of regular check up of blood and treatment of STDs without any hesitation

By next year, our portfolio would increase to the level of Rs.1 crore. With the unflinching support from our funders, SURAJE would soon establish itself as an organization which would serve the purpose of its existence.