

## Secretariat to Mahila Samakhya

*As part of a national alliance, Best Practices Foundation has been requested to take on the role of acting secretariat for seven states where Mahila Samakhya (MS) programme has been in operation - namely Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana and Uttarakhand to work with their federations. The alliance consists of....*

*MS is a government initiative for education and empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly from socially and economically marginalised groups. The MS movement, over last three decades, has created a paradigm of empowerment for a generation of women, young girls, men and even the state. The movement has massive scale and has touched lives of more than 20 lakh women and girls directly in the country through its various grassroots innovations namely the Nari Adalats (informal women's court), Kishori Sanghas (adolescent girls groups), Mahila Shikshan Kendras, informing the design of the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, since 2004, and bringing the adolescents girls too within its ambit. The large scale impact of these different innovations has set the ground for MS federations and Sanghas to take the next steps forward.*

*With the withdrawal of the central government's support to the Mahila Samakhya programme, the institutional building and strengthening processes have been stalled, affecting the ability of federations to operate. The abrupt cessation of programme funding in 2015-16 disrupted the phased process by which responsibilities were being handed over from district units to women's federations and sanghas.*

*As a secretariat, BPF's role is to work with an alliance of organizations facilitate ideation of new programme directions, knowledge creation and to identify areas of support for 300 plus federations which are no longer funded, to create their own solutions, in line with BPF's mission of "innovating with the poor".*