

Visitor's Guide



Samidha Bahuddeshiya Sanstha

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Introduction to Samidha Learning Community

"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way", as the saying goes, we at Samidha, have chosen the way we should go, then we already started a journey and with the exposure and learning from it we strive to become a pioneer in this important but often ignored subject i.e. social sensitivity.

Samidha, is a registered Trust working in the urban slums and countryside in the state of Maharashtra of India. Samidha is on the mission to create the socially sensible world, with our major focus anchored on nations future i.e. children. We are developing our own theme based curriculum to teach different academic subjects. We also help children understand different social concerns and work towards them on the individual level. We try to teach them how can they contribute to keep the goods from their culture, enrich their cultural and societal values with increasing their sensitivity towards social behavior in which they live in day to day engagements.

Samidha has gained quite wealthier experience in field of Education for almost a decade now. Samidha is working on various interesting researches in the Education sector. We are focusing on the Research oriented implementation of the Educational programs. We were working on the Self Organized Learning Environment (SOLE) which is the brain child of TED prize winner Dr. Sugata Mitra. We are looking towards the Education beyond schooling and trying to develop community learning spaces. We have started our projects in the remote locations of Nagpur districts. We have already started with the after school centers 50kms away from Nagpur. To become a socially sensible, one has to be open for learning things, sharing experiences and harvesting values that would be beneficial to the society. To address this fundamental need we have sown the seed of "Samidha Learning Community".

Samidha strive to achieve a socially sensible world. We believe, it can only be achieved through a learning community where everyone will be interlinked and will learn the values, share the values and produce the good experience, beneficial values out of it. It will be a community of very active and reflective citizens. Everyone involved will be applying thoughts to every action undertaken. They will look at the larger picture and will try to solve the problems within it. But, at the same time they will assure that action will be very localized and personalized. Every individual has some contribution in the bigger social problems. Unless and until everyone withdraw it, larger social problems cannot be addressed and we cannot move to better and healthier society. One simple thumb rule to follow will be to open up your social mind, communicate to everyone around, understand things and their social impact, learn what is good for society and share the best practices.

Samidha Learning Community

COMING together is beginning,
Keeping **TOGETHER** is progress,
Working together **IS SUCCESS!**

As the above quote guides us, most important thing would be get together for the cause. Everybody has to accept that they are cardinal members of this great social movement and then such socially motivated individuals will start positively interacting to form a social group. Nobody from that group, as an individual, will be a perfect and ideal individual to transform the group into a well-formed and dream ideal society on day one. Someone might be good at addressing what exactly are the hiccups on way to form a socially sensible community. Someone may be exceptional at mapping context of those issues with the solution space, whereas somebody will be master on architecting and executing the solutions to the problems that are causing the destruction in the making of a healthy society. So in summary, it will be the expert's congruence pushing towards same goal as a whole. They will come together, they will unite, they share the experiences – good and bad ones, they will talk on best practices with all possible dimensions to the problem and they would then come up with an all-pervasive, competent and sustainable solution to the problems on the ground. Off course, it's not as easy as catwalk, it needs all type of social brains to unite on same level and become transformers between social problems and solutions to address them.

One of the key and vital thing here from the perspective of Samidha Learning Community is that, it's very much essential for every change agent here, is that change has to be started from self. All the application of good has to start from the self towards eradication of the negativities in the thoughts, behavioral patterns and in turn the actions. And once S/he will get transformed then that will be shared with others as examples, practices that were learnt. This will turn into very effective communication process within the society. People will try to lead entire humanity in the right direction. Whenever new ideas are put forward there will be lot of discussion on that and finally everybody will mutually agree to work on those. Such lot of new lines of thoughts will always keep moving in the society. It will look like following.

This will become a learning community where every individual will keep thinking about their own actions, change their own daily practices, try to understand other's point of view and react to those. Such society will demand every individual to be very active and keep forming the knowledge base for the society. It will not be learning space for children but for every individual in the society. There will be undefined power structure but every individual will be committed to create such a society and will keep learning new things for the same. Key thing here to underline would also be to become more responsive than reactive towards social concerns. Individuals would also learn to avoid just being judgmental and instead will actually try to contribute towards social welfare.

Characteristics of the Samidha Learning Community

As discussed above, we are looking for the community where everybody will get opportunity to follow their own path of self actualization and at the same time individuals will keep thinking about the larger social problems. Such learning community is not possible without everybody getting opportunity to present their views, practices new thoughts, and bringing in knowledge from external world. In a way it will be a self healing social community which over the time will turn into complete socially sensible world. Such community will have following characteristics.

1. Adhere to Samidha/ Democratic Values
2. Sustainable consumption by minimalistic / need based life style
3. Create Social Security: Commons, Guarantee scheme, SHG
4. Self-reliance for basic needs: Food, Shelter, Cloths
5. Precaution and Pre-work for increasing Happiness Index. #

India ranked as 122th nation in world for overall happiness index.

Project Design

We are planning to develop model Community Learning Centers in three villages and Pune Urban slum. Such learning community centers have following components.

1. All facilities to access the information (Library, computers, internet, etc)
2. After school centers for children working on child centered and critical pedagogy
3. Place for villagers to come together (Discussion room, Meeting hall, etc)
4. Display of village's culture, festivals and fauna/flora
5. Facility to experiment different suggestions (Soil testing labs, etc)
6. Community Radio station to share ideas with others
7. Facility for self-sustainability on Basic needs (Spinning and cloth weaving facility, etc)
8. Knowledge sharing of environment friendly alternates (Organic farming, Sanity blocks, vermiculture)
9. Alternate Livelihood facility centers (Live stock management, supply chain, product development)
10. Awareness about the development of the commons (SGH, Jungle rights, common land, etc)

Locations

We are working in Pune slums for almost a decade. We will continue working in the Pune slums. Additionally, we have identified 3 villages in the Metpanjara cluster, Katol Tahasil, Nagpur District of Maharashtra. It is 50kms from Nagpur city. Location is connected to the reserved forest.

How to reach : Nagpur Location

Address:

"Vihang", Samidha Bahuddeshiya Sanstha,
Maragsur, Post – Metpanjara,
Taluka – Katol, District – Nagpur,
State – Maharashtra, Country – India.

All visitors coming by Air, Train, Bus should come to Nagpur, Maharashtra, India. You can take state transport bus or private vehicle to reach the location.

1. By State Transport Bus

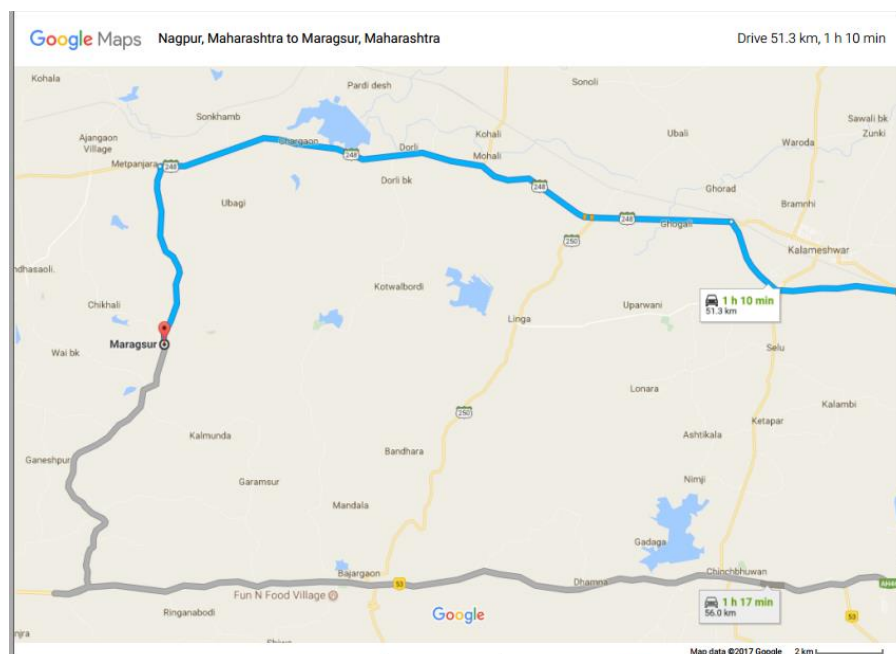
After reaching Nagpur come to *Mor Bhavan* bus stand and take bus for Katol. Check before seating whether bus will stop at Metpanjara (Express buses don't stop here). Maragsur village is 6kms away from this stop and there is no facility for travel. We will arrange for the pick up from Metpanjara village, if communicated beforehand.

2. By Private Vehicle (Car, Bike)

If you are coming from Nagpur then take Katol Road. You need to drive 40kms without any turn. Metpanjara village is just 13kms before Katol. Take Left turn just before Metpanjara village, which is called Maragsur fata. Drive another 3kms to cross Wajbodi village and take left turn. After driving another 1km towards jungle, you will see Samidha farms on the right.

Map

[Click here for Google Map](#)



Guidelines for visitors

Food:

1. We have good kitchen and visitors are allowed to cook anything. Samidha provide minimal grocery, vegetable required for cooking. Visitors can carry additional requirements.
2. We normally serve Indian (Maharashtrian) food. We are fine preparing other cuisines, if visitors can cook and could manage in the available resources. We encourage visitors to actively involved in the kitchen.
3. We avoid using LPG gas. There is a bio-gas plant. In case sufficient gas is not produced, we cook on traditional fire wood stove (Chulha/Chul). You may need to cut the wood, light stove and cook using the same. That is how you will learn some grammars on the minimalistic life style
4. You are not allowed to cook or serve non-veg food in the kitchen. Eggs are allowed though. You can milk buffalo and use the same for daily use.
5. You can buy or earn organically produced vegetables. If it's not available, we purchase it during the weekly markets in the nearby villages.

Clothing:

6. Females Girls can wear Sarees, Panjabi dress (Kurta-payjama) with Dupatta. Males can wear jeans, trousers, T-shirts, shirts. Sleeveless are not recommended at all. Boys and Girls can wear 3/4th Trousers and T-shirts during household and farm work.
7. Carry enough cloths during the rainy seasons. Also carry umbrella, rain coat, etc. You may need cap and long stole during summer.

Water:

8. We don't use processed water for drinking. We use water from well directly. Foreigners can use same water after boiling but other processing facilities are not available and recommended.
9. We have small water tank for general purpose use. We have just sufficient water tabs to avoid wastage of water. In case, water is no sufficient in the tank, you may need to pull it from the well.

Precautionary:

10. Carry sleepers for using at home, Sandals for general purpose and sports shoes during Jungle, Farm, Sports activities. Please don't carry high hills. You may walk long distances.
11. Girls are requested to carry Sanitary Napkins and other required things. No medical facilities available in the nearby villages. Girls are suggested to burn sanitary pads after use as there is no other facility for disposal. Girls can get bio degradable sanitary napkins on farm. It costs 25 Rs. per pad.

12. You may come across lot of animals, insects, reptiles in the vicinity. Visitors are requested not to kill them at all, instead try befriending them as needed.
13. You can experience extreme Summer, Rain and Winter in the Vidarbha region. Please check with the team before arriving and make your arrangements accordingly. Specifically, during summers you need to take special precautions, as temperature crosses 45-47 Degree Celsius.
14. Plastics bags, bottles a like non-degradable wastes are not allowed to be thrown in the farm and nearby area. Please carry all non-degradable waste (plastic) back to cities where it can be recycled. Degradable waste can be dumped in the compost pit available in the farm.

Life Style Suggestions:

15. Samidha farms shares the boundary with Reserved Forest. There are no human or animal incidents reported in the vicinity. However, its strongly recommended, not to roam around jungle area all alone, in the daytimeas well as in the night.
16. We believe in self-reliance. Therefore, we don't have any helper for managing you daily routine. All visitors and Samidha volunteers together take care of cleaning, cooking, and other routing tasks.
17. Please carry your own bedding, in case we may not have sufficient for all. We may provide mattress, pillow, bedshits. You need to make your own arrangements if anything specific is required.

Toilet and toiletries:

18. We have Indian and Western style toilet. We encourage use of Indian toilet as it consumes less water. Indians generally don't use toilet papers. You can carry those if required.
19. As far as possible, we discourage use of products like Tooth Paste, Soaps, Washing Powder, and Hand Wash. We suggest alternative natural products. We also make it available for visitors. We can share the procedure if anybody is interested in using the same.

Electricity:

20. We stay in the farm and electricity is available only for 8hrs and that to during the odd hours. We have very minimal lights in the house. We have solar charged lights to use in the night. Additionally, Visitors are requested to carry Torch.

Transport:

21. There are no transport facilities here. There is one state transport bus in a day, from tahasil place to village. We provide two wheeler motor bike for transit. Visitors may need to walk long distances if situation demands.

Interactions with Villagers:

22. People are generally very welcoming in the India and specifically in villages. Villagers are not used to interact with foreigners. Therefore, their behavior may appear little different initially. Everybody is requested to maintain healthy conversation with the villagers. Please avoid confrontation of any sort. Please avoid interaction with the opposite sex while alone. It's advisable to roam with translator if you understand language.
23. Precautions while interacting with villagers,
 - a. Always have normal discussions
 - b. Don't gift, share anything
 - c. Don't promise anything on behalf of organization or otherwise
 - d. Avoid discussion on topics like religion, political unless it's part of the project
 - e. If you observe something wrong, please report it to POC immediately
 - f. Don't invite villagers to residence without any specific reasons. Please discuss with PoC before planning any activity which need visits at Samidha farms
 - g. Please make sure that children are not getting any feeling of inferiority. Please avoid disclosing details which may cause this like salary, etc.
 - h. Don't carry any expensive ornaments. Mandates like mobile, laptops, watches are allowed on the owner's risk. Village is safe but we are taking precautions to avoid any issues latter.

Official:

24. Visitors are strongly recommended to come with planned agenda It will be good to discuss and prepare notes well before arriving the location. Casual, friendly, unintentional long stays are highly discouraged.
25. Visitors need to fill-in all visit details below for Police records. You must carry your photo ID, Address Proof in Original. Non-residential Indians (NRIs) and Foreign Nationals need to carry their passport all the time.
26. Samidha uses residential facility developed by Prachi, Kirti (Samidha volunteers). We pay them Rs. 100/day/head towards maintenance charges. This amount is purposefully kept minimal to encourage visitors and work with children here.
27. Consumption of alcohol, cigarettes, or any other substance abuse is strictly prohibited during the visits. Wines and Bear are also not allowed.
28. Every visitor is expected to follow Samidha routine. Your day will start at 5.30am. Routine throughout a day is as following. There could be few changes based on the tasks at hand.

Check List

Carry:

1. Torch,Candles, Matchbox
2. Mosquito Repellent
3. Sleepers (in home), Chappels (outside), Shoos (Jungle, Farms, Sports)
4. Two photos copies of Address proof and ID proof each
5. Two passport size photographs
6. Sufficient Cloths
7. Minimal bedding

Not to carry:

1. Plastic bags
2. Cosmetic products/perfumes
3. Electrical/Electronic appliances like Shaving Machines, Hair dryer/roller, Massagers
4. Soft drinks, Packaged Food, Junk Food, etc
5. Costly Jewelry

Daily Routine

Time	Activity/Tasks
5.30am	Wake up call
6.00am	Yogasan and Pranayam
7.30am	Home clean up
8.00am	Breakfast
8.30am	Shramdan
12.30pm	Bath
1.30pm	Lunch
2.30pm	Rest
4.00pm	Community service
6.00pm	Break
6.30pm	Sarv dharma Prarthana/Agnihotr
7.00pm	Discussion
8.30pm	Dinner
9.30pm	Discussion
10.30pm	Sleep

*There could be few changes as your plan of visit. You need to make sure that Cooking, Cleaning, Dusting, Exercise, Yogasan, Shramdan are accommodated in the daily routine.

Visit Details Form

Photo

Samidha Bahuddeshiya Sanstha, Maragsur

1. Name of the person and Address –

2. Date and Time of arrival –

3. Profession –

4. Description include Age and Identification –

5. Purpose of the visit –

6. Adhar card or passport number (as applicable) –

7. Companion (Man/ woman/ boys / girls/ Animals) if yes write the names –

8. Articles (Luggage) with stranger –

9. Do you have any relatives in the village? –

10. Probable period of stay in the village –

11. Place of last halt –

12. Place of halt in the village –

13. Date and time of the departure from village –

14. Place of Destination –

Visitor's	Mentor's or Guide's	Approver's
Name	Name	Name
Signature	Signature	Signature
Date	Date	Date

*You need to carry two signed hard copies of this form for Police and Samidha records



Picture 1: Exercise and Yoga



Picture 2: Volunteers working in community kitchen



Picture 3: Shramdan



Picture 4: Good Nightt