

**SELF EMPLOYED
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

**A TRADE UNION OF
INFORMAL WOMEN
WORKERS IN INDIA**

Informal Economy in India

- **Bulk of ‘working poor’**
- **Rapid growth in last decade.**
- **93 per cent** of the total workforce
- **97% of the women workers**

Informal Economy in India

- **92% of work-force,**
- **62% of GDP,**
- **about 50% of National Savings and**
- **39% of total exports**

Self Employed Women's Association

Members are women in informal economy:

- Street vendors, such as vegetable vendors**
- Homebased workers, such as garment stitchers, leather workers**
- Women selling their labour and services, such as agricultural labourers, child care providers**
- Small producers, such as small farmers, milk producers**

Self Employed Women's Association

- **Registered as a Trade Union under Trade Union Act, in 1972.**
- **Recognized as a Central Trade Union Organization by Govt of India in 2007**
- **Nearly 1,000,000 members all over India in 2006**

Growth of Membership

Year	No. of Members
1972	1070
1982	10,733
1993	45,936
1999	215,234
2003	704,166
2006	959,698

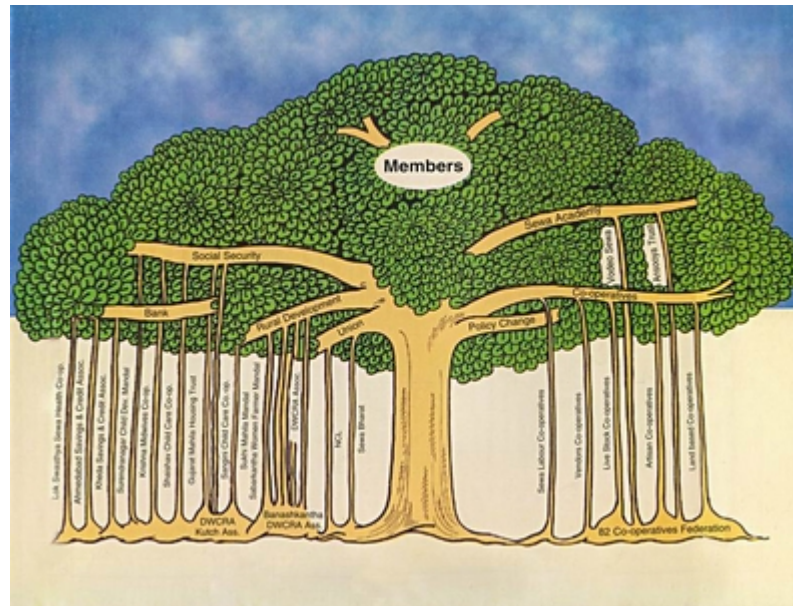
Objectives

- To organise women workers to achieve **full employment**, i.e. work security, income security, food security and social security
- To make women individually and collectively **self-reliant**, economically independent and capable of making their own decisions

Strategy

- SEWA's strategy is through an integrated approach based on member's needs. In order to meet all the needs of its members SEWA has promoted many "sister" organizations which together constitute the "Banyan Tree" of SEWA.

Structure of SEWA



Sister Organisations

Finance and Social protection

- **SEWA Bank** with 200,000 depositors and working capital of Rs 900 million
- **SEWA Social Security**--Health Care, Child Care reaching 200,000 members
- **SEWA Insurance**—130,000 covered
- **SEWA Pensions**—40,000 covered

Sister Organisations

Enterprises and Employmen



- SEWA **Marketing Companies**— Reaching 40,000 producers women producers
- SEWA **Housing and Infrastructure**-- 40,000 given services
- SEWA Academy—**Training** 30,000 women a year
- SEWA promoted **Co-operatives** and **Associations**—covering 100,000 women

National and International Initiatives

- **National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in informal sector 1988**
- **Bill on the Social protection for Unorganized Sector Workers 2007**
- **National policy for street vendors 2003**
- **Member of ITUC, IUF, ITGLWF, BWI**
- **Founder member of WIEGO**
- **ILO Homebased Workers Convention 1996**
- **ILO Resolution on Informal Economy 2002**

Organising in the Informal Economy

- **Continuous Capacity Building of workers**— worker education classes, leadership classes, basic ideology classes etc.
- **Democratic Functioning from Grass Roots up**—trade committees, area committees, trade council, executive committee
- **Building Economic Organizations owned by workers**—District Associations, Co-operatives, Worker owned Companies

Organising in the Informal Economy

- **Struggles for Rights**—Minimum Wages, Right for space for street vendors, Right to social security, Rights of Homebased Workers, Law for Construction Workers etc.
- **Struggles for Representation**—Representation as a Central Trade Union, Representation on Policy Making bodies.