

Part – 2: Workshop proceedings

2nd Peer Review Workshop, Uttar Pradesh

Venue: Neda Gram, Lucknow

15th -17th March 2004

Part 2 – Workshop proceedings

Supported by - Management Consultants - (Development Alternatives & Pricewaterhouse Coopers)

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Proceedings of the 2nd Peer Group Review Workshop

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The second Peer Review workshop held from 15th to 17th March 2004 in NEDA Gram was organized by PANI and supported by DFID. The workshop was basically intended to coordinate and analyse the efforts undertaken by the PACS programmers in their respective thematic areas. The workshop also aimed at laying down a clear vision of path of progression for systematic development. The Management consultants -DA played a significant role in the whole three-day process of the session. It was attended by all the Project heads, State Anchor for PACS programme in UP Dr. Avanish Kumar and Ms. Kiran Sharma from DA and Mr. Sandeep Majhi of PROACT. The chief moderator for all the sessions was Avanish Kumar. The list of all other participants is furnished in Annexure1.

Proceeding of day – I : March 15, 2004

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Day – I

At the onset all the participants were required to get themselves registered and were provided with a learning kit from Pani. All the participating members were asked to introduce themselves to make the workshop function in a participatory mode. The workshop was inaugurated by Mr. Anees Ansari, Principal Secretary Panchayati Raj, Mr. Bharat Bhushan from PANI welcomed all the dignitaries and participants and expressed that in the workshop evaluation of our work would be done. He said that it would be nice if all of us could contribute as much as possible and if we are able to reach out to the people with whom we are working, the PACS services would prove successful. Avaneesh Kumar said that out of 74 districts covered in 11,000 villages, PACS, out of which the committed SHGs are 10,000, touch only 3.5% poor people. He focussed on the need to empower the women and the Dalit through the Panchayat. According to him the strategic focus of the workshop would be -

- ◆ How to intensify a cluster
- ◆ Impact of multiplication system
- ◆ Develop and establish sustainable mechanism. The focus component would be developing a platform for advocacy for the election of 2005. He said that DA has started a new innovation by incorporating the financial sector into rural sector for convergence.

The presentation of DA attached in annexure

Dr Rakesh Chandra, the next speaker and panel member stressed on the rights based approach to the road to development. He said that income generation programme should take a back seat and political participation should be emphasized more. He said that constant monitoring of effective functioning of the PRI important. Even the role and participation from the affected masses crucial in determining that the PACS programme is reaching the targeted group. Mr Anees Ansari, Principal Secretary Panchayati Raj and chief guest for the day, spoke about the potential of Panchayati Raj getting constitutional recognition and quoted the amounts sanctioned for its strengthening. He stressed on the need for empowering women and said, " If women perform well at the panchayat level, it will form a strong basis for legislature and parliament". His main points were on giving rights to the Panchayat by the Government, allocation of resources according to the 11th finance commission and state finance commission for upliftment of zilas etc, sanitation projects with an aim to provide one toilet to each house, drainage programmes, the importance of identifying and portraying the role of good NGOS to the masses and the pension plan scheme of the Panchayati raj. He said that 37% women constitute zila panchayat, 36% of women members are in block panchayat, 35% women are pradhan and 38% are panchayat members. He said that this year a sum total of Rs 11.25 crores has been sanctioned for the development of the Panchayat. Next he talked about total sanitation projects which provide one toilet to every dwelling unit. Other water and drainage related schemes like Jal Dhara etc are making a difference by touching the vital section of the societies and enriching its day to day lives .It is important to identify and portray the role of good NGOS to the masses and highlighted the pension plan scheme of the Panchayati raj. He said that bureaucracy at the lowest level has to overcome their mindset and start working with the illiterate but elected representative. We need to safeguard against the pressure of gender based, religion based and caste based. There is a need to strengthen the functions of Panchayati Raj on account keeping, transparency and sincere workforce for accountability. The determining factors of

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globalisation, liberalization and privatization govern poverty directly hence need to safeguard against its negative intervention.

Ashoke Bhai supplemented the principal secretary's speech by giving a vote of thanks on the observations of the chief guest, which would be the guideline for the Peer Review workshop and assured that these would be observed.

The briefings for the session were continued by the cross visits learnings and presentations of the following groups.

PRESENTATION OF THE BUNDELKHAND GROUP

The first round of presentations started by the Bundelkhand group. The presentation stressed on the area being a plateau, hence of water leading to multitudinal problems like unemployment, migration, health problems, women working in difficult conditions, no market for traditional goods and irrigation problem due to low level of water. Further, it was noticed that zamindars and thakurs dominate the poor and the downtrodden classes, there is lack of information and defects in the distribution system, unemployment, non management of natural resources and that planning is not based on local needs and issues. Socio cultural aspects that relate to PACS intervention are the rich culture and the value based lifestyle of the region. Being a politically weak area the political leaders neglect the village development work

Demographically and economically the region is rich in minerals and fertile soil, possess mountain and stony area, is rich in forests and possibility of herbal medicines can be explored. Neglect of natural resources by government and ruling officials and mining of granite and other stones is leading to air pollution.

Background of PACS intervention in Bundelkhand region

Most Common Thematic Area- Local-Self Governance (LSG)

Through Advocacy helped people in getting land from illegal occupants. Networking with other like-minded organizations and stressing on women empowerment. In Bandokhar village a Suggestion Committee of SHG formed and activated .All the field staff of 4 organizations have complete knowledge of PACS.

Major highlights in progress accomplishments

- people are becoming more aware about PRI, about panchayat and gram Sabha meetings and becoming active participants
- women and dalits coming out of their houses and raising their opinions
- knowledge of land rights and importance of planning
- women coming together by the medium of savings

Best practices seen in

- proper filing and record keeping and staff coordination

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- transparency in work, weekly staff meetings organized for sharing and exchanging experiences, developing and involving a resource person from local area in the programme

Key Issues

- rural entitlements for NRA
- formation of nyay panchayat
- quorum of gram Sabha
- BPL
- Transfer of other departments to the panchayats
- Recognition to scheduled tribes

Conversions required in

- District planning committee
- Rural resource management
- Management of available natural resources
- Sustainable agriculture
- Agriculture based industry
- Regional organizations should work together on sectoral issues and like minded partners

Challenges

- Defining salary structure
- transportation facility
- I.E.C. material to be provided
- training and exposure in different states
- expectation, political interference and lack of political power
- robbery affected areas, droughts and reliefs

Additions and suggestions from members

Sources of livelihood to be added, tribes like the mushahar and kols deprived of their status and their land rights an important issue , tribals declared but their entitlement rights not yet secured to them, animal husbandry an important aspect of Bundelkhand economy ,knowledge of government schemes like BPL, Yojana not reaching the targeted group of people, state of education not improving, 79% girl dropout rate in Lalitpur district. Rights to adivasis and issue of education to be incorporated. Overall challenge in the region is that of survival and livelihood. How to address that?

- Problem of advocacy of government policies in these areas
- How can the resources be mobilized
- Liaison with the govt necessary
- How women can be empowered while maintaining their cultural values

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Comments

Women through SHGS have started coming out and able to attend meetings and express themselves, need to check and address the problem of migration as it affects the society as a whole security aspect of dacoit infested area of Chitrkoot to be dealt with

Issue of land rights can be addressed with the help of NABARD'S role in providing a model to Govnt on individual watershed projects on rights based projects like Paan cultivation encouraged in association with the horticulture department..Need to advocate on the issue of transfer of power to panchayati samiti and try to use the culture of Bundelkhand for upliftment of the women

Presentation of the Purvanchal Region

The Purvanchal team started with the premise that the average land holding in this region is below one acre that makes a major population of small and marginal farmers engaged in agriculture , hence problem of

Land entitlement arises with

- landless families
- patta and its possession
- land record related problems

Unemployment and migration

The majority of the population is engaged in agriculture and agriculture labor because the average land holding is not able to meet their basic minimum requirements. The income from agricultural labour is available for only 3 months in a year. Hence due to unemployment a majority of the youth population and even the children are migrating to western states.

Problem of minimum wages

- Gender discrimination
- More working hours
- Less wages than the declared wage provisions

Problem of floods and forest related issues

The key vulnerabilities in the development process include education and literacy, negative influence of powerful persons, attitude of government functionaries, lack of knowledge among the target groups about the government development schemes, non functional panchayat system, lack of access to resources to poorest sections, poor economic conditions

The Socio-political and cultural aspects include- party politics, gender discrimination, political interference on right based issues, caste/religion based politics, and community specific culture

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Background on PACS intervention

Common Thematic Areas are self-help to meet basic poverty needs, women empowerment and strengthening the rural self-governance

Nature of key activities include training, workshop, meeting at several levels, exposure, awareness campaign on related issues, SHG formation and strengthening, convergence/interface and micro level planning

Major highlights

- organized women demand generation
- increasing demands of government schemes
- increased women participation in panchayat
- emerging strong CBOs
- increased visibility and image building of CSOs

Best practices adopted are monthly meetings with partners CSOs, monthly reporting, and quarterly visit of lead CSOs at partner CSOs. Interaction with stakeholders, teamwork, initiating the process of community participation in decision making process through regular periodical review meetings of staff, involvement of chief functionaries towards project goals and minimum code of conducts.

Key Issues		Innovative components
Water management	-	micro enterprises development
Livelihood security	-	skill-building efforts
Peace and social cohesion	-	health and education intervention
Land related issues	-	voter education campaign
Forest policies	-	model development support provision
Girl and women trafficking		

Concerns and Challenges-understanding of chief functionaries on thematic areas

- mobility support and computer set, audio-visual aids, lack of inputs to involve MPWs, lack of staff development opportunities, low honorarium structure to community level workers and low administrative cost

Additions and suggestions from members

Problem of migration affects the status of women, whether she is a destitute woman, widow or a working woman., hence even they should be brought under the purview of women empowerment. Issue of social harmony a serious concern which need to be tackled. Small petty issues lead to social tensions especially during the electoral atmosphere. Ensuring land entitlement secured to all as rights, alliance with the media for advocacy, action plan for child trafficking. Flood leaves some issues for advocacy in the form of soil erosion which adversely affects the health of people residing nearby. Nature and image of NGOs to be reaffirmed. For land disputes community has to be mobilized and legal support to be ensure. Water-logging problem leave the marginalised people deprived of their lands for most of the year. Trafficking in Indo Nepal

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border need to be curtailed. Issue of adopting forest villages. Image of NGO's, working towards supporting the nature or against it. Flood land & soil department approached to deal with the soil erosion problem

Presentation of Central UP Team 1

A group member facilitated the presentation by highlighting the poverty situation of the district to be very low in ranking because BPL as low as 40 -45% and very low images of agriculture labour still present.

The key vulnerabilities seen in development process are political interference in difference levels that hamper overall development of a particular sphere. *Land lordism* retard growth of individuals

Bad policies of government and presence of politically motivated NGOs and implementation of the programme not carried out. Demographic & economic status of Pratapgarh very poor -

See annexure

Why Pratapgarh chosen?

Rank in 100 poorest district - 56

Surrounding district Raebarielly not in priority list of PACS.

PRI poorly managed

Most of lead CSOs & its partner located in Pratapgarh in nearby district.

Most Common thematic areas - LSG And Women empowerment (SC & OBC)

Major highlights in programme accomplishment

Rights issue raised by panchayat at gram sabha, micro level planning and SHG members active as pressure groups, number of women and SC as Panchayat representation increase in monthly meetings of gram panchayat, Distribution of Indira Awas to the poorest of poor is passed in open meetings of Gram sabha, Panchayat committees become functional resulting in increased enrollment of children in primary school. Awareness among women increased through SHG

Best practices adopted

To empower community for self sustainability to help people to help themselves

Issue of advocacy, right to information and land rights

Low and different wages and poor implementation of programme, panchayat election in block Mangrura not held since 1995, issue of conveyance, programme for generation and disabled persons. Service delivery component, health and education, programme for construction works

Concern and challenges

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Poor implementation of PRIs and centralization of power

Widespread area and no fixed assets provided

Convergence into other government programme

Security aspect of the programme

See Annexure

Suggestions and additions from members

Is the problem of water-logging really so serious? Counter measures to rectify the problem. Some programme for gram sabha awareness needed for distilling power in them. Social security and social harmony to be substantiated at ground level.

Presentation of Central UP Team 2

The presentation started with *profile of the zone* - See Annexure

The central UP team 2 has concentrated its thrust on Sitapur district and shown the district's development index through tables and figures stating its growth over the years. The team's main thematic area was on women issues like, dependence in elite members of the society, dowry system, poor quality of housing, discrimination on the basis of caste/class. Social disparities, lack of political awareness, lack of opportunities for participation, lack of organization among women, lack of awareness regarding voting rights, lack of recognition. Economically, areas include availability and access to limited resources, limited employment opportunities, environmental degradation, high interest rates on loans etc

Emerging dominant issues are Rural natural resource management with conservative linked livelihoods and enterprises, sub sector approach for livelihoods, enhancing the service delivery approach, gender cum women and girl child based intervention. Capacity development for PRIs and local groups. Micro-finance and advocacy planning

Programmatic challenges-Areas of concern

10% enhancement on both direct and indirect manpower involve in implementing the PACS project

Conveyance and transportation, harmony in terms of remuneration within the partners family. Focused support to the organizations of PACS partners.

Suggestions and Additions from members

Approximately 8 lacs women involved in traditional chikan and zardozi crafts, need to make the workers get a fair share in profits. Promotion of handicrafts through media

Common networking of organizations working in this field to facilitate research and dissemination of information among themselves. Horticulture, medicinal and other organic ways to harness the wealth of natural resources.

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Consolidation and learnings of the first day

The presentations from the three groups of Bundelkhand region, Purvanchal region, Central UP 1&2 had common points as emerging issues like alleviation of poverty, giving land rights and labour rights and ensuring women empowerment through entitlements and rights based approach. One fundamental aspect touching the thoughts of all participations was decentralizing and democratizing the Panchayati raj and making it a resourceful institution powerful enough to change the lives of the people attached to it .Providing basic human rights e.g. land, water ,education and equal status to the poorest of the poor would strengthen the implementation of the PACS programme in the long run.

Consolidation of learnings of the panelists

- 1) Jitendra Chaturvedi : Found that the findings of all the groups share a common background. Problem of health, unemployment, water management ,minimum wages etc common in all the presentations. Government schemes not reaching the targeted people is a serious aspect which needs to be tackled.
- 2) Anil Singh : Stressed on the problem of livelihood and management of rural natural resources. New methods to be adopted for sustainable agriculture which can be associated with biomass etc for further development in agricultural sector. Networking groups formed for advocacy and making SHGs a strong tool for exerting pressure. Cross visit should be on a periodic basis and the model of excellence should rest on ourselves. Every organization should be associated with ICT for sharing of information.
- 3) Ms. Saraswati : Removing poverty from people is the crux of the PACS programme. Unemployment in itself not a problem but issue of land rights a problem . If people get entitled to land rights it would automatically solve the problem of unemployment as people would be engaged in their lands.The problem of migration can also lessen if the lands are made fertile for cultivation.
- 4) Daulat Ram : Issues of livelihood, management of natural resources, peace and social harmony, women empowerment and employment structure all manifestations of poverty. Unemployment due to mechanization of labour and harvesting machines. Untouchability, a serious matter which needs to be tackled. Determining the role of PACS in forthcoming elections.
- 5) Bharat Bhushan : Talked of two main issues of land rights and peace and social harmony. Hoping to address the issues through PACS but the challenges are enormous. All the issues related to poverty directly. How to advocate policy in community coordination
- 6) Ashoke Bhai : He stressed on strengthening the PRI and democratization of the local governing level. Issues of livelihood, women empowerment etc and need to innovate the SHGs. They are mostly looked upon as income generating unit. Convergence and interfacing of the effect for multiplier effect. Poverty alleviation through cultural practices. Strengthening of democratic practices in the PRI can be a significant innovation. Remove social evils and practices that hamper development process. Entitlements of rights are different in different areas, hence need to addressed accordingly. Irregularities

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in the BPL need strong advocacy. Need for capacity building and institutional training. Cross visits should be planned well in advance and workers should be allowed to visit other organisation to see the positive and negative aspects of the organisation.

- 7) Sharad Pradhan : Sharad Pradhan spoke on the non functionality aspect of the panchayat raj and how Panchayats were able to advocate it as it is a problem of not just UP but everywhere. He stressed on how the discrimination of women through caste and the problems of low wages, untouchability and land rights are signs of poverty and should be curbed. He also talked about corruption of functionaries and how some of them hamper the good work carried out by the NGOs and how Panchayats can play a vital role in ensuring that proper monitoring and evaluation is done. He focused on the important role of pressure groups in demanding their rights and ensuring the Government implements the policies for their entitlements.
- 8) Rakesh Chandra : Talked about land rights issue, livelihood and community participation. Right to information is a basic human right which needs to be addressed. Gender audit for review should be carried out and, training process through computer networking. Development devoid of rights and rights devoid of development has no meaning attached to it. We must take advantage of the government programmes and see how it can be implemented. As a follow up, NGOs role should be properly situated.

Other speakers from MC-DA

Ms. Kiran Sharma : Talked about the MEAL system and how it was necessary to provide the right kind of support to the partners. It was necessary to provide computers to every partner with supportive training so that their productivity increases. Provision of computers would facilitate online reporting system which in turn would increase the capacities to coordinate and work together. This year regional consultations would be based on state based workshops and issues of specific themes like livelihood, gender biases etc to be achieved. Tie up with gender training institute is an integral part which will contribute in the good governance of the NGOs in the long run. Evaluation of good NGOs marked a positive response from the Planning Commission and much can be accomplished if we can work together in alliance with the government. Minimum wage to the project staff involved in good work would be assured which would be enhanced at the time of annual review of the budget. Integrated approach against thematic approach should be adopted for more understanding. In case of emerging issues in form of additional projects, additional budget would be provided.. Those CSO partners performing well in terms of program management and achievement can be considered for independent projects. She concluded saying that at the end of the workshop, every partner should have a ready action plan for the next six months.

Dr. Avanes Kumar : Stressing on the points that issue based consultation would be regional in nature and additional projects getting priority. Supplementary projects would receive fresh appraisal guided by the principles from MC. Constructive criticism should be promoted so that the pros and cons of all the working capacities can be enhanced and coerced for a single opinion from all. For credibility alliance, capacity building of board members and the NGOs partners incorporated for good governance at all level.

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At the end of the session a feedback form prepared by the SSRO was circulated to get response from the participants. This activity was followed by a cultural programme 'Daman Ki Chakki' highlighting the issues of community participation towards a common goal, confiscation of land rights due to poverty and violation of women's rights because she is a widow.

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Day 2

The second day workshop started with a recap of the previous day highlighting the events of the day. The first presentation as initiated by SSRO of the PACS overview in state level.

The presentation was based on the information derived from 15 projects selected for cross visits in UP prior to the workshop. He said the perspective was not limited to the PACS programme alone and was extended to state and national level too. The presentation was divided into four parts and screened through graphs and slides. The first part on poverty and its consequences was shown through six slides each signifying the fact that hunger, poverty, inability to go to school and a doctor, lack of freedom and lack of representation are all manifestations of poverty which can be removed when the people are empowered with the right to information, have inclusion and participation and have accountability and local organizational capacity. The second part demonstrated the situation of PACS prog in UP through 9 slides. Out of 70 districts in UP, 90% of backward areas is being covered by PACS. See annexure for detail. Citing the example of a school in Kerela where 100% people are literate, lack of public inertia results in the backwardness of this state. The third part consisting of 13 slides showed how the intervention of PACS programme has improved the flood areas which were badly affected earlier. The fourth aspect covered the perceptions about the SHGs, PRI as strong citizens forums to influenced local level social, political and development scenario. They can be oriented to high yielding benefits of good and democratic governance, indicating the right measures. The CSO image getting boost with scientific application of development insights, acquiring skills and observing disciplines.

The presentation was followed by a brief round of discussions which indicated that status of Mau and Chitrakoot was not clear and that the parameters and indicators of poverty based on swing analysis and progress trends were not based on grassroots level. It was required to take grassroots level indicators for more accuracy.

Mr. Vinod Jain from PDRO initiated the next session. He talked about the vertical movement of SHGs. They are considered as political outcomes where financial transaction should not take back-seat, it should be ensured. If the base of the SHG is weak, it affects the entire country level.

In a cross-question one of the member raised that SHG is never considered from political angle, mainly engaged in micro credit activities for income generation.

The presentation that followed the PDRO report was a comprehensive analysis of the role of advocacy by CFAR.

The presenter from CFAR discussed about the kind of role they would like to play with PACS programme in monitoring the advocacy issues through assessments and representation in the mainstream. The basic aim is to streamline the data available from the remotest area and bring forward the most trivial issues in the agenda so that it gets wider perspective for consideration. Their purpose is to link every small achievement with a reflection for all to see. The process starts with assessments for any issue e.g. child rights, women empowerment, local self governance etc from poorest and marginalised areas and creating a documentation

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with the support of action groups, universities, newspapers etc. Then the representation begins in the form of advocacy seminars, presentations by creating role models of current events and flagging them for further reviews. Through this larger issues get magnified and nature of the challenge of emerging issues get narrowed down for easier focus. They aim to work with PACS and bring changes for the advocacy issues. According to them, targeting the people/community matters in advocacy and for that strategic focus needs to be achieved. The ongoing process of challenges and scanning of diverse issues can be consolidated when we recognize the following

- immediate goals
- intermediary goals
- long term processes

Suggestions and Comments from members

- ◆ need to flashback on ground-realities, negotiating at ground level is an art which needs to be mastered
- ◆ today 87% people linked with craft, should become an issue for advocacy
- ◆ strategic focus which is multidimensional at working level has to be advocated first.
- ◆ partnerships required for collaboration of perspectives
- ◆ advocacy has to differ at policy level and implementation level

PACs programme concerned about measuring poverty, once BPL printed becomes a Government document but what is the authenticity of the document and how is it implemented needs to be tackled by NGOs and Action groups. Similarly mid-day meal adversely affecting health rather than a boon, can advocacy measures improve the standardization of the mid day meals adopted?

The main objective of the peer review workshop as a tool for analysis and generating a common platform for advocacy is clearly mentioned in their presentation attached.

The main issues and goals for advocacy for future strategies are

Women's empowerment- effective implementation of women related programme and girl child education as a mandatory State obligation

Panchayati Raj - decentralized planning process and encourage new leadership

Dalit and marginalised groups -review the scheduled list(SC/ST), transparency in BPL list formation and rehabilitation of the displaced

Advocate region specific policy and prioritization - in Bundelkhand region

The main areas for intervention including poor and non performing districts would be Bundelkhand, Eastern and Central regions of UP. Based on indicators concentrate focus in these areas

The members were henceforth divided into groups and asked to discuss policy changes, status of public awareness, how to use PACS as a platform and how to extend the program beyond PACS.

Five groups were formed for discussions on the following advocacy issues

1. Livelihood
2. Panchayati Raj

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3. Natural resource management
4. Women Empowerment
5. Marginal Communities

The names of the participants of each group is furnished in Annexure

The guidelines for discussion were

- ◆ discussion of the issue
- ◆ project/program strength
- ◆ identify breakthroughs made
- ◆ challenges-policy, attitudinal awareness, poor governance, networking challenges
- ◆ instruments-local action, public hearing, dharna, media etc
- ◆ timeline

Group discussion and presentation of Marginal Communities (Group 5)

The main group of marginal communities are -

kols, musahar, karol, kanjar, vantania, parkula, banjara, sapera, sorya

The main issues for advocacy are -

- Status to Scheduled Tribes, land rights, ration card-BPL list
- Knowledge of government policies and schemes problem of minimum wages
- Seasonal security of labour and right to education and health rights- at zila/state level
- *Project program strength*
- Policy changes and intensive research
- Resource centres and Survey of baseline data
- *Advocacy* from district to state level through
- Interface camping, Media briefing and Community based organization

Identified breakthroughs made in attaining partial success for achieving status

- mobilising community organization ,access to public space, success in
- land rights and cause promotion and visibility and political awareness

Challenges faced

- Political willingness and different policies at state level
- Negligence on the part of government,calculating actual population figures at state level
- Mutual coordination among CSOs and Janpaksh dharita ka abhav
- The demands for entitlement of rights are attempted to be achieved through the following agenda/plan

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Activities	Timeline
Distribution of demand letters to all political parties during lok sabha elections	April/ May 2004
Campaign at district level through rally, Dharna, demand letter etc	November 2004
Meet state level functionaries,	December 2004
Initiatives at state level, share reports, advocacy Planning	
National level initiatives and advocacy	

Suggestions and comments from members:

Procurement and protection of land rights given to the tribes for shelter and irrigation purposes. Even tribes who have not been recognised and declared the status by the Government need to get their rights. Tribes which are marginalised not getting addressed properly. Advocacy needed for addressing the backwardness and poor condition of these tribes.

Group discussion and presentation on Natural Resource Management (Group 4)

The main issues of concern were land and patta possession, land ceiling act, bhumi avantan varasat illegal possession of land, jungle-forestland v/s rajasvagaon, reserved forests and right on natural resources, water-conservation of traditional sources of water and flood relief measures
The Challenges confronted were that the policies were not favouring the issues, problem of illiteracy and affect of oppression, bribery in patta transaction and land rights holdings not favourable

The Tools employed at regional level are

- Awareness, community organisation, land survey, public hearing, rally, legal training, land documentation, PIL, media advocacy through sensitization, dissemination of information and media tours
- *Process documentation* done on the following aspects
- Organizational capacity to impart action training
- Microenterprise and Entrepreneurship
- SHG and Women empowerment
- PRA and RNM
- Gender issue
- Fair trade management
- Skill Based-handicraft, jute based, incense stick, coloured candles

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- Diversified agriculture etc
- Market research -international buyers, inter institutional linkages

See Annexure for exhaustive list

Suggestions and Comments from members:

The issue of land rights is the sole right for any movement. Networking done on land issues and strong activism needed to advocate it. Coverage of geographical area not present in networking which hampers the process of overall development. Need to prioritize the efforts and work towards Joint Forest Management projects.

Group discussion and Presentation on Women Empowerment (Group3)

The main issues for discussion were

- 1) Identity crisis where inclusion of women groups in local samitis needed for maximum participation and empowerment of women with the support of men.
- 2) Health -appointment of female doctors in primary health centres/sub centres and ANM necessary. Awareness about health rights and advocacy on diminishing the practice of female infanticide and reducing infant mortality rate.
- 3) Education- provision of imparting education from classes 1-8 in every gram panchayat. Research and studies conducted to remove barriers in women education , distribution of mid-day meals through women SHGs. Vocational training to women after class 8.
- 4) Social security- fight violence against women, increase minimum wages for a respectable living and making it an increasing source of income in the long term. Equal participation in government jobs, pension schemes of widows and the aged.
- 5) Participation in decision making- to collect and disseminate information about women rights, strengthen women leadership at gram sabha and panchayat level and advocate property rights.

Strengths of PACS programme

- ◆ Women strengthening abhiyan
- ◆ Training of women representatives and local woman workers

Challenges

- ◆ Gender biases and bad norms
- ◆ Attitude of politicians
- ◆ Government policy and its implementation
- ◆ Corruption at low level

Tools employed for women empowerment are the following

- ◆ Sensitisation and abhikram on low level woman and mens's groups
- ◆ Public awareness programme
- ◆ Intersectoral coordination
- ◆ Research, study and documentation

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- ◆ Media sensitization and exposure
- ◆ Networking and coordinating with state and national level advocacy
- ◆ Identifying and giving direction to women leaders prior to panchayat elections
- ◆ Pressurise representatives of political parties through demands and pressure
- ◆ Networking with Rashtriya Mahila Aayog
- ◆ Advocacy of state woman commission

Suggestions and comments from members

- Advocacy of pilot projects as role models
- Policy for the government to upgrade primary school to junior high school with provision of female teachers- so far this policy is only at nyay panchayat level-needs extension to wider areas.
- Provision of separate toilets for girls in school consider if any social aspects like untouchability etc preventing girls from going to schools
- Different laws for hindu and muslim women create hindrances in their overall upliftment-women need to know their basic rights including rights to property for security aspect.
- Right to information given and let every woman decide on their own how they want to use their rights
- Ensure leadership right of a woman under PACS programme

The presentations of the group discussions were followed by yet another activity on capacity building and training programme by an employer from DA. A questionnaire was distributed to all the participants who were then formed into four groups according to the listed format namely

- 1) Expectations from the training programme
- 2) Expectations from the targeted group
- 3) Place and duration of training
- 4) Language used for the training

The main idea of this effort was to involve capacity building initiative through training in PACs programme and to strengthen internal system and processes within the organisation. The training is done at two levels

- ◆ Program level-inter-organizational
- ◆ Organization level- organization specific

The group activity report attached as annexure.

Other major flashpoints of the session were -

See SHG as a collective bargaining mechanism

Situational assessment reveal lack of negotiation ability of the poor hampering empowerment effort

Pension and wage employment scheme- targeted among the poor

Region wise disparities and weak democratic processes and mechanisms at the PRI levels

Mass movements and civil society partnership needs to be strengthened

Development should be treated as a major component for change

Media support solicited for advocacy, consolidate success stories for advocacy

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Advocacy needed for flood relief and forest villages and highlighting discrepancies in the wage system.
Widow pension plan, tribals of Fatehpur not given the status in 20 villages, gender issues
issue of HIV/AIDS due to migration and otherwise addressed through the PACs platform
and corruption and food security

Consolidation and learnings of the 2nd day

The SSRO presentation consolidated the perceptions of SHGs, PRIs as strong citizens forum to influence social, political and developmental scenario. However, the parameters and indicators of poverty need to be based on grassroots level for more accuracy. The seminar on advocacy stressed on its active role in bringing the issues from the remotest areas to limelight by giving it a voice and a platform to perform. There is a need for a strategic focus on a specific goal for fulfillment of entitlements and alleviation of poverty. The group discussions and presentations on various thematic areas created a room for dialogue for the members to specify their strengths and challenges. The group activity on capacity building highlighted the desires of the participants of how they would like to be trained on the various aspects of training programmes. The cultural programme that followed at the end of all the sessions also encompassed the issues of community participation, dominance of women in PRI, gender discrimination and question of subsidies. The issues were reflected in a subtle manner through skits .

Proceeding of day – III : March 17, 2004

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Day 3

The third day started with a brief recap of 2nd day highlighting the issues discussed. The topic for discussion for the first session was on the need to restructure the agenda. There are 67 partners today in UP working with PACS. For the next peer group workshop formation of core committees, coordinating agency (even partners can lead) and principles of cross visits was discussed. It was mentioned that experience of the three-day forum was important for exchange of learnings but needed more information on

- *additional projects in PACS programme*
- *relevance of involvement of resource organization with PACs and its interaction with the working group`*
- *reviews and studies of ground level need to be shared*
- *review process-design and functioning important and needs to be incorporated with the workshop*

On the allocation of budget it was cleared by DA that out of 6 lacs sanctioned, 3 lacs will be transferred immediately to facilitate fund moving for every project.

The presentation of the preceding day group discussion was followed with the following group -

Group discussion and presentation on Panchayati Raj (Group 2)

The group looked upon the vital points of strategy

- What are the needs
- what do we want to do
- what are we capable of

The main Issues for Advocacy emerged were the registration process, voters list -no duplication

- election process, women participation-create awareness and alertness to step out as women representatives, Nyay panchayat /DPC to formulate and bring into functional process in the
- forthcoming elections of Panchayat

The main goals are - Maximum women from reserved and deprived section represented to be elected and 85% panchayat to be functional for maximum participation

Aims and trial methods

◆ *At Gram sabha level*

- Awareness about good representatives
- Right of information about voters list
- Environment for unbiased voting
- Commitment letter from contestants
- Capacity building of the contestant

◆ *At Gram panchayat level*

- Seeking cooperation of CBOs

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- Availability of amended voters list
- Awareness of election process
- Availability of documents and its information

- ◆ *At Regional Panchayat level*
 - Exposure and Orientation of media
 - Election supervision through media, lawyers, NGO, GO etc
 - Observation of election process by committee
 - Information camp during nomination through poster/pamphlet- mobile van

- ◆ *At Zila panchayat level*
 - Information centres at block and strong networking and campaign
 - Observation committee
 - Who should be contestant at zila level
 - Meetings at workshop
 - Demand letter

- ◆ *At Pradesh level*
 - Information centres
 - PIL meetings

- ◆ *At Kendra level*
 - Workshop
 - Legal committee
 - Media intervention

The Challenges for institutionalizing the PRI are faced by

- Political influence, Political and social tyranny
- Changes at policy level, Scarcity of resources- manpower and material
- Social segregation, Media attitude and Government attitude being non cooperative

The Strengths of the institution are

- Self-confidence/ willpower/ strength, Learnings from past experiences
- Intellectual team, Sustainable support system at state level
- Preparedness and Liasion with others
- Successful experiences, Large scale documentation
- Active and powerful/broad based state level networking, Voluntary agencies

Suggestions and Comments from members:

Lack of administration in coordination and cohesion in the PRI structure and need to involve media through orientation and exposure. Creation of a system where the malpractices during elections are exposed and action taken against them. Presence of a block level election monitoring committee which will stop the illegal expenses during the election. At the gram sabha level, awareness created to rectify the voters' list and

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building a congenial environment for capable candidates. That PRI is working under ordinance and not under law needs to be questioned. The issue of quorum in gram sabha is exploitative and allows the pradhan to take arbitrary decisions which needs curbing. Advocacy required to make the quorum mandatory and ensure 50%reservations for women. Need to educate women willing to contest election and people who benefit the most to be representatives for optimum foolproof of the system. A leaflet on rules of Panchayat to be distributed for generating knowledge about the PRI.

Group discussion and presentation on Livelihood (Group 1)

Diverse portfolio, Demand driven, Development driven, Dynamism -sense of owning a practice and Dovetailing-convergence with different stakeholders

Main issues of livelihood are Agriculture, Land rights, Minimum wages, Mechanization of development works, Social insurance, Minimum supply price, Subsidies, Agriculture inputs-seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, Patent ruling, Contract farming and Forests- rights on minor forest producers and land related issues. The networking is done through Scaling of SHG and formal delivery function of PRI. The instruments employed are the regular collective voice and visibilities, Gram gadar, ICT and Media-audio and video.

The strengths of the programme

- Mobilised community groups with peer pressure
- Local self-governance
- Convergence (sectoral function, PDS, KVK etc)

The Challenges faced for livelihood rights are

- Policy of attitudinal awareness, Minimum wages, Right to determine the price of the product
- Fair trade standardization, Information/current awareness, Demonstration with exposure and
- Corruption-strengthening the delivery process through local peer pressure group.

Breakthroughs identified so far

- Convergence and Capacity building
- Linkage and marketing promotion
- Fulfillment of credit needs and Capacity building

After the group discussions and presentations, **CFAR** group gave a suggestive frame on advocacy perspective on thematic issues, from an advocacy point of view -

- capacity of groups reached a certain level-through documents, networks, SHG formation, linkages formed- all crucial for advocacy;
- one advocacy model can be presented encompassing all the issues;
- all presentations except one talking only about issues and sub issues, have to join together for a focussed attention on any one aspect of an issue;

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- building advocacy and development and advocacy -two terms where building is an internal process of PACs program and development comes at the take off stage when we transfer our responsibility to stakeholders/media/government officials etc.
- advocacy is a very focussed and targeted tool which fails when many voices speak up
- advocacy should have consensus of a single voice representing all

According to CFAR, group of Marginal communities has a focus because the grassroots work is complete, documentation done and linkages/ sensitisation made with zila adhikari, whereas in other groups discussion is still going on. Role of CFAR in this group could be to create a model and show how all capacities can be brought to a common platform and see in wider context of state/national/international level.

Suggestion and comments from members –

See various issues of livelihood as life sustaining opportunities to generate income for survival and living. Experiment with contract farming, sunflower, eucalyptus, matchstick making (in Purvanchal) etc. Draw cooperation from local self-governance for support and establish networking with PRIs, resource functionaries. Processing of sugarcane/paddy should be ensured at the local level by the local inhabitants. Explore business avenues at local level based on the concept of livelihood. Need for respect of each respective livelihood. Try to join with the safety norms of the government. Spread knowledge about the consumer related acts on seed, manure etc so that farmers can claim their cost. Monitor if the treasury is flowing correctly to the last creative person and not getting meddled in between. Enhance livelihood through biotechnology in liaison with CIMAP, NBRI etc and see if it clicks for securing livelihood. Convergence necessary in education, health, agriculture, capacity building etc.

Suggestions for next Peer Review workshop

For planning peer review we need to conceive the contents and bring up issues pertaining to efforts in the state and issues that bear grassroots level. Strengthening PACS programme at the state level is the main criteria for organising such an event. The suggestions for the next peer review included the following points from various participating members

- ◆ Invite concerned officials and venue should not be a constraint for this
- ◆ Donors and funding agencies should be invited (for a particular slot) in peer review programme so that we are able to influence their strategies
- ◆ A document covering the list of all partners and their activities be prepared and circulated as a directory for information to all about all. A newsletter or periodical could do the same.
- ◆ Cross visits be done at three levels- cf level, middle level and grassroot level
- ◆ Document on Khoj programme by VHAI can be used as a model for PACS document in UP
- ◆ Clarity and total responsibility of peer review on coordination committee
- ◆ External resource agencies be invited that gives an opportunity to access their perspective
- ◆ Coordination committee should take responsibility to reach out to donors and other resource organization
- ◆ Community leaders/representatives be invited for peer review workshops
- ◆ Products made under the programme need to be exhibited in peer review

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- ◆ During cross visits field force analysis be undertaken as a measure to get optimum inputs
- ◆ Women coordinators can be preferred over men in thematic area TA 2
- ◆ More women representation in project staff

The venue for next peer review workshop is yet to be decided by the coordination committee. The options however are Jhansi and Gorakhpur. Selection of core committee was done on the basis of regional, gender and thematic representation and representation of the last coordinating agency.

The coordination committee of the last peer review of August 8 2003 was

- 1.MCT-Dhruv Singh Yadav
- 2.UPVHA-J.P.Sharma
- 3.S.S.K-Ashok Bhai (coordinating agency in Peer review workshop 1)
- 4.PANI- Bharat bhushan- (coordinating agency in Peer review workshop 2)
5. BGVs- Sunil Singh
6. SEWA-Runa Banerjee
- 7.BMSKSS-Aftav Alam
- 8.IIRT-Sadhana Singh
- 9.ABSSS-Bhagwat Prasad

Newly constituted Coordination committee (March17, 2004)

- 1.JPSS-Arshad Ansari-Central (PRIs)
- 2.BJSA-Daulat Ram- Central (Dalit)
- 3.PMKS -P.S.Patel- Eastern UP (Dalit)
- 4.SAPIT-Ms.Chandra Prabha- Central UP
- 5.NEED- Anil Singh- Central UP- (Women Empowerment)
- 6.PANI- Bharat Bhushan- Eastern UP (Women Empowerment)
- 7.PASK- Awadesh Gautam-Bundelkhand- (PRI)
- 8.MJM- Ms. Saraswati- Bundelkhand (Women Empowerment)
- 9.SEWA- Runa Banerjee- Central UP (Women Empowerment)

Selection of next coordinating committee and agency was done by suggestions and inputs from the members who stressed on the importance of the task factor in last committee which should be the guiding factor for selection of CC this time .The criteria for selection is regional and gender representation .The roles and responsibilities of CC appear to be planning peer review and conceiving contents, bringing up issues pertaining to efforts in the state/ issues that bear grassroots relevance and strengthening PACS programme at the state level.

Plan for next round of cross visits-venue and tentative programme

For the next round of cross visits certain aspects need to be considered for facilitating the process. Ample time should be given so that all team members can assemble and commit during the whole process, all the members present should have the formats circulated in time, knowledge of project areas of all the partners, transparency of information about the partners, designated people should find time to accompany. The

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cross-visits should not be seen as a monitoring or inspection event and the aspects undertaken while visiting should be clear to all. A briefing of the area to be visited would enable the members to concentrate broadly on the aspects to be covered for review and adequate time be given to avoid night travel. Even cross regional visits can be undertaken for value addition of their knowledge of their region. Presence of a document available to all partners and only a few discuss it with other partners for clarity of thought.

Suggestion to give the responsibility of the documentation on advocacy issues, reports among us and follow up to SSRO. Time span to be extended and notice given beforehand for sufficient preparation. Long term planning needed to make the cross visit affair so independent and open that it does not get affected by any external influence. It should not be limited to its chief function alone but view it as a team building process where the cross visits ethics and character is not attacked.

The main emerging highlights and guidelines of the cross visit are the following

- ◆ Dissolve personal ego and see it objectively
- ◆ Time management-appropriate time given for planning
- ◆ Board members need for check and balances
- ◆ See it as cross learning not cross inspection
- ◆ Sharing of thoughts and experiences
- ◆ Since CSOs have their own commitment and timeline, regional level planning can be done in advance
- ◆ Openness and transparency among all partners
- ◆ Need to know how much is each other learning from one another visits
- ◆ Identify who e.g. head, middle, CSO will participate
- ◆ Clarity of observation required for documentation
- ◆ Project presentation of the region to be visited before going for cross-visit
- ◆ Inter regional cross visit e.g Purvanchal<->Bundelkhand regions
- ◆ Nominate a resource person who can provoke and highlight emerging issues.
- ◆ Value analysis and cross analysis of the content

Open Session

The moderator from DA consolidated the learnings from the sessions of three days and expressed his concern about how the PACS platform needs constant evaluation for which these workshops are held to gather the views of the PACS partners to be able to incorporate the views and work accordingly. He talked about sending the documents, reports to all the organisations once the documenting part gets completed. Talking of supplementary projects, he said that any project that has completed 18 months can apply for a supplementary project. The approval of the supplementary project would involve the same pattern of submitting the concept paper, registration under FCRA norms, project appraisal etc. A separate amount of budget is fixed for the supplementary projects and a maximum of 10% for the existing ongoing projects is added for filling up the gaps. Defining the role of SSRO and other resource organisation in PACS, it was mentioned that SSRO's role keep changing in different states. The significance of ROs (SSRO&PDRO) at the state level enables the development and appraisal of the projects.

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The planning for the gender training institute is still in process but it aims at training the women and NGOs. How many state-based partners willing to contribute, is yet to be seen. The speaker from CFAR validated that the PACS programmers need to prepare a strategy for the next six months on issue based advocacy. The media can then be used as a tool to perform advocacy at multiple levels and to reach the ultimate stakeholder.

The SSRO concluded that poverty has a tangible element attached to it and its parameters and indicators are all suggestive of the need to concretize its objectives. At SSRO, creating a resource base to provide supportive supervision to PACS programmes is of utmost importance.

Consolidation and learning of the 3rd day

The events of the third day emphasized on the discussion about the formation of the coordination committee for the next peer review, set agenda and guidelines for the next cross visits and building a uniform platform for all capacities to work towards a common strategic goal. To create a resource base to be able to provide supportive supervision with complete documents and dissemination of information to all partners. Media as a tool for advocacy needs to be examined with a closer look towards how can it be utilized to the best of our capacities. The members of the new CC were constituted but the venue needs to be decided by them. However the topic of convergence, which ought to have formed the core part throughout the three-day sessions was left with unresolved issues. Networking process necessary for joining government officials and NGOs, which then can work consistently towards a specific programme for a longer duration. The workshop ended with a thanksgiving note from all members to the coordinating agency-PANI.

Annexure - 1 : Key thematic areas addressed by the cross-visit teams

I. Eastern UP team

- Land holding being below one acre posing problem as major chunk of the population engaged in agriculture.
- Land entitlement rights giving rise to landless families, possession of patta, land record related problems.
- Unemployment and Migration
- Minimum wages leading to gender discrimination, more working hours.
- Problem of floods and forest related issues

II. Central UP - team 1

- Local self governance
- Women empowerment mainly SC and OBC

III. Central UP - team 2

- Self Help
- Policy advocacy
- Social Cohesion
- Women Empowerment
- Local Self Governance

IV. Bundelkhand team

- Local Self Governance
- Out of 15 project areas selected for cross visit learning the main key issues that seem to have emerged for analysis are
- **Participatory** involvement of the local community in the process of education and awareness
- **Pro-dalit** with special focus on dalit community to enable their access to local governance and development facilities under the government provisions.
- **Academic** with emphasis on PRI practices and opportunities of entitlement realization at the grassroots level
- **Institution and capacity building** and strengthening at the grassroots to ensure effective project implementation
- **Dissemination of information** about the provisions and rights
- **Mobilization of women** in ensuring entitlement of their rights and **strengthening self help groups** in procurement of the same

V. Common thematic areas

- Self Help to meet basic poverty needs
- Women Empowerment
- Strengthening the rural self governance

Group Presentations and Guidelines on 16th March 2004

Main working groups – Key issues

1. Local Self Governance
2. Women Empowerment
3. Livelihood
4. NRM
5. Marginalised Communities

Guidelines

- Discussion of the issue
- Project programme strengths
- Identify breakthroughs made
- Challenges
- Attitudinal awareness
- Corruption/ poor governance
- Networking challenges
- Timeline