

Inaugural Session

7th PEER Learning Workshop was organized on 20th to 22nd Aug. 2006 at Hotel Capitol Hill, Ranchi.

It was attended by all PACS CSO partners, members of State Support Team and representatives from Management Consultants, N. Delhi



The inaugural session began with a presentation by Mr Sharad Tiwari, State Manager, Jharkhand, on overview of PACS programme in the State.

He informed that 19 districts in Jharkhand with 84 Blocks and 5323 villages has been covered under the programme. The programme has reached some of the most vulnerable communities like the primitive tribe groups (Birhor, Pahariyas), dalit communities like Bhuiyan, Mushahar, tribal communities residing in remote areas and women. As a part of community strengthening measure, more than 5000 community based organizations (CBOs) have been formed wherein 3985 groups are of women SHGs alone.

Jharkhand has 16 network, 11 individual and 3 interstate projects covering diverse issues related to environment, women empowerment, old age issues, health issues, livelihood issues etc.

While 37% of the project are in the initiation phase (less than 1 yr old), 40% are in the withdrawal phase.



Describing when a person / family becomes vulnerable, he stated that vulnerability comes from lack of access and control on resources, lack of skills and illiteracy, being destitute, disabled, aged and from poor health conditions. Women are a vulnerable group as they have little voice or control in the patriarchal social setup. Their access to information and support systems is also very low.

PACS in its programmatic design has tried to address these issues. It aims at strengthening the Civil Society through capacity building measures, taking up advocacy on behalf of the vulnerable and creating convergences with the government programmes.

CSOs being the catalytic instrument to bring about such changes, PACS emphasizes on building the capacity of the CSOs through OD inputs, regular management support mechanisms, research and documentation, learning forums and promoting issue based networks of CSOs.

Peer Learning Workshop has been designed as a learning forum where CSOs come together and share their experiences and learnings. It gives an opportunity to showcase their work to the outside world and provides space to discuss and strengthen network issues.

Ms Kiran Sharma, Programme Director, presided as Chief Guest of the Workshop. She said that PACS program is probably one of the largest civil society programmes not only in India but also in

the world having a network of about 610 partners from across 6 States (Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra, MP, UP and Chhatisgarh) covering 100 poorest districts.

She stressed that the programme would come to a close in December 2007. Therefore the CSO's needed to put in more efforts and showcase their learning's and achievements to move forward. She thanked all the CSOs for their support for making NREGS week successful. Through NREGA initiatives towards making some alternative for the livelihood of poorest of poor can be taken. She said that there is a need for tracking of gaps in implementation of NREGA to be able to do advocacy.

She insisted that the forum of Peer Learning Workshops be used optimally for initiating debates and discussions among CSOs for advocacy for the poor.



**Session I
Presentation of NREGA Week Findings**

Dr Neeru Johari, Manthan, SBCA, Jharkhand made a brief presentation of the NREGA Week Celebration in Jharkhand from 3rd – 10th July. She informed that the celebrations had been organized at Commissioner level and celebration included *padyatras*, rallies, distribution of pamphlets, wall writing, miking,

documentary shows, collection of testimonials, etc.



Commissionary level workshops were held on the given dates:

N.Chhotanagpur	: 8 th July'06
Santhal Pargana	: 21 th July'06
S. Chhotanagpur	: 12 th July'06
Palamu	: 16 th July'06
Singhbhum	: 12 th July'06

The objectives of the Week Celebration were to

- To create awareness among community on NREGA provisions.
- To identify problems and gaps in implementation of NREGA.
- To establish collaboration among different stakeholders for its better implementation.

Describing briefly the observations during the celebration, Dr Johari presented the following:

- Community is aware of NREGA but lack of information on the provisions & procedures in community & ground level functionaries
- Lack of coordination among government authorities



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- Difficulty in access due to all process are centered in the block
- Confusion prevailing on Implementation due to absence of PRI & formal Gram Sabha structure In most of the cases names of disabled persons have not been included in list of Job Cards.
- In places where work has started proper work site facilities have not been provided for.
- Provision of one-third women reservation has not been taken into consideration while work allocation.
- People do not know why job cards have not been received, even after 3 months of filing application.
- In many places, job cards applications were made by BPL listed families only.
- Almost nil awareness that disabled persons are also to be benefited under the act.
- Money has been paid by the villagers for application forms,(Rs.2-5) photographs and also job cards in some places. (Rs. 15-60)
- Almost nil awareness about giving application for job after getting Job Card.
- Fixation of date for receiving applications for Job Cards by block.
- Misinformation that only 20 people will be given job cards.
- Majority of the people in the survey areas do not understand that in order to get employment/work under NREGA they have to apply for it.
- Employment generation under NREGA has been confined to the continuation of existing works.
- In most of the Blocks the BDO was unable to give figures for current employment under NREGA
- In some sites, work has been made available through contractors.
- '*Bicholias*' or middlemen are found to be acting as intermediary between people and block administration.
- Work not being done according to village plan.



Dr Johari enumerated the highlights of the Celebration as

- North Chhota Nagpur Commissioner Mr. Vishnu Kumar decided and announced dates on the spot for review with district and block official on NREGA progress.
- He acceded to the demand for setting up information centers cum nodal office in collaborations with NGOs, at Panchayat level
- He also agreed to develop one model village in each panchayat for NREGA implementation.
- Director- SIRD offered PACS to collaborate in different training programs organised for district and block officials.
- Public Hearing was held in Palamu.
- DDC-Chaibasa responded very positively on memorandum submitted.
- Signature campaign was held in Deoghar for its inclusion under NREGS
- Wide spread coverage of campaign in media.
- Presentation of NREGA facts to Planning Commission member, Mr. Abhijit Sen.

Mr. Ashok Bharati, NACDOR shared about the emerging issues in context of Jharkhand. He urged the CSOs to take up advocacy for formation of State Level Tribunal of NREGA with representations from different streams like Civil Society, Journalists, Activists and many others. After its formation, cases on violation of the act could be heard. The State Tribunal would be able

to provide a forum for redressal. From here, few important cases can be taken up at the National Level Tribunal and after that if not heard or responded to, these can be addressed to the Govt. during the winter session of Parliament.

He spoke about the forthcoming India Social Forum to be held in Delhi in first and second week of November. He also discussed about the events to be organized in Jharkhand and Delhi. A public meeting will be organized in Ranchi in Jharkhand and some of the Testimonials collected from the state will be presented between 9-11-Nov-06.



Mr. Anil Singh from Vada Na Toda Abhiyan said that the campaign was formally launched in November 2004 in Delhi with objective of making the Government more accountable. He said that the campaign is not demanding anything new from the Govt. but the aim is to make it more transparent. Joint efforts can do wonders as has been seen in case of RTI.

The government was convinced to enact the Right to Information Act. He said that "Vaada Na Todo Abhiyan" works with three focal points: Right to Education, Right to Health and Right to Work. By using NREGA as a weapon Right to Work can be achieved. This was followed by an open session in which the following issues were debated:

In context of Jharkhand, Right to Work, Right to Health and Right to Education are all linked. Agriculture being the main economy, improving it will provide solution to the rest of the problems NREGA is the first law of India in which there is no provision for schedule caste and schedule tribe. After going into finer details you feel that the tribal have been excluded. The participants however felt that this is one act which gives equal rights to all and that such differentiations should not be made.

In this law there is no mention of the nature of work that can be given to women or disabled persons.



Ms Keya Chatterjee presented Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

Cluster wise NREGA Scenario Briefing

The following persons made presentations on behalf of their respective Commissioners:

Mr Lalit Kumar: North Chhotanagpur Commissioner.

(Participating CSOs: Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra, Jan Seva Parishad, Jan Vikas Kendra, Manav Vikas, RKSM, Darpan, SHADE, SHARC, JMJK, JJM, Agragati, Naya Savera Vikas Kendra, Vikas Kendra Bagodar, Gramoday Chetna Kendra Chatra, Prayas, Lok Prerna Kendra, SAF, CFD, Prakash Jan Seva Samiti, Srijan Foundation)

Mr Vinod Kumar: Palamu Commissionary.
(Participating CSOs: Sampurna Gram Vikas Kendra, GSKVM, IDF, NARMDA)

Ms Purabi Pal : Singhbhum Commissionary
(Participating CSOs: Shramjivi Mahila Samiti, Pragati Luyadih, TSRDS, SLADS, CHI, ASES, Lokhit Sansthan)

Mr Sachchidanand : South Chhotanagpur Commissionary
(Participating CSOs: SPAR, GVT, KBET, YMCA, JUS, Vikas Maitri, TCDR, SGVV, ____, TSRDS, IDAS, Viskasan, CCDS, RAISE, SSS, Vikas Kendra Simdega, Sahbhagi Kendra, Vikas Foundation, ____, KSRA, H&AT, AAAT, ____, SASKK, Gumla, CDKKVK, LGSS, CSS).

Mr Gokul: Santhal Pargana Commissionary
(Participating CSOs: Chetna Vikas, MASSP, YAM India, DUS, LVB, Lok Prerna, Gram Jyoti, Judav, AKP, GSS, GVF, Jago Foundation, LJK, Pravah, Manas Parivartan, Jai Vasundhara, Lokdeep, Rishta, Ashray, Badlao, LCSS, Durgesh Lok Lalit, Gramoday Sansthan, Prerna Bharti, Vikas Bharti Foundation, CDC)

The findings of the Week were shared with other CSOs. (Presentations Annexed).

Session- II Follow Up and Future Strategy Planning on NREGA

Mr. Balram, State Advisor to Supreme Court Commissionars on Food Rights, discussed about the future and follow-up strategy on NREGA. He cited the example of Bihar where with the help of some organizations, formats for job cards and application have been printed. He further said that there is provision in the Act about receiving application on plain paper or in application format. Application could also be given in collective manner in a group form. In many places it has been observed that officials have been giving the receipt for the application

but without any official seal which is compulsory. There is provision about receiving the application verbally also but nowhere verbal applications are being received. In context of Jharkhand where literacy levels are not so high, Government should be urged to take up application forms verbally. The future course of action should focus on speedy implementation of Act.



Mr. Balram urged that there is need for more discussions about the guidelines of NREGA and it is time that the State Government should finalize the state guidelines.

The CSOs should take up the most important responsibility to make the people aware about provisions of the Act and secondly the Government should also be pressurized to take up awareness generation campaign so that people could take maximum benefit from it.



Dr. A.K. Basu, Chairman, NAB (PACS) shared about Micro Planning Process at Koderma about NREGA. He focused on importance of micro

planning in the context of NREGA and how it can benefit the community. NREGA talks about creation of assets and this can be very well be identified by micro plan. He said that majority of the population rural areas are directly or indirectly involved in agricultural sector.

He discussed about the adverse effect of corporate houses like Reliance, Pepsi and others venturing into agricultural sector and how it would accentuate the vulnerabilities of the poorest communities further. He said that for the sustainability of farming, there is need to not only increase the productivity but also value added production. PACS has about 100 partners in the State, and if each partner does a thorough survey and documentation of 2 Panchayats we could cover about 200 Panchayats. This will help us to compile micro plan of about 200 villages. A Draft copy of the same could be presented to the Government. Consensus emerged on the need for training regarding development of micro plan.

Two days training to be organized in batches at SRI for PACS partners from last week of 28-Aug-06 to 23-Sep-06.

Day - 2 Session – III

Ms Sabita Banerjee of Gramodaya Chetna Kendra presented a brief recapitulation of the proceedings of Day 1.

Presentation of Synthesis Report

Mr. Shailesh Muzumdar, State MEAL Coordinator, made presentation of draft of Synthesis Report of Jharkhand.

Describing the State context, he stated

- Jharkhand is resource-rich state but unable to leverage opportunities due to historic reasons.
- Poor performance on all development indicators. Fund utilisation for developmental works is very low.

- Political instability is a hurdle in development focus. Decision making becomes difficult in face of such instability.
- Extremist interference in developmental works.
- More than 45 MOU requires 50 thousand acres of land; however availability of land is a constraint, leading to displacement.
- People migrate out of compulsion in search of livelihood



He enumerated the ways forward as:

- SHGs / CBOs have been formed which can be used as platform for future interventions.
- PACS provides opportunities for capacity building for civil society organisation.
- Linkage platforms to be created with technical and financial resource organization for better livelihood promotion.

He stated that environment created for partnership in implementation of development projects. There is an opportunity to learn for new and small partners as part of network. The platform can take up advocacy issues.

He urged the CSOs to start consolidating the achievements, learnings and documenting them. The CSOs can track down their achievement on entitlement realization. The programme is nearing its closure, so the CSOs need to start preparing for evaluations.

As part of capacity building, focus should now shift to CBOs for sustaining them as change agents.

Session – IV Mainstreaming Disability in NREGA

Mr. Neeraj Sharma from Leonard Cheshire Home, Bangalore made a presentation on mainstreaming of disability in NREGA. He said that for the last 57 years, Cheshire Home has been working in 55 countries. With NREGA, CHI has started taking the following initiative in different states. The number of disabled in India is more than 4 crores. As per report of WHO 5 to 6 % of population of any country is handicapped. That means in India it is around 4 to 5 crores of whom approximately 70% live below poverty line. For their inclusion in the scheme he stressed on the need of the following:

- In Job Card it is nowhere mentioned whether the cardholder is disabled or not? It must be mentioned in the card.
- With this standard wages should be fixed for PwDs which should be based on time and not on piece basis as filling of soil, sand mixing, managing drinking water and so on.
- Specific, clear and immediate communication from Ministry (CPD) to the implementing machinery at all levels to avoid discrimination against Persons with Disabilities.
- Sensitization of implementing machineries.
- Inclusion of disability in all Govt. released communication materials.
- Proactive role to be played by Department of Disabled Welfare.
- Effective Grievance redressal for PwDs.
- Each adult with disability to be considered as a separate household regardless of his/her family.
- Preference in the recruitment of jobs at administrative and supervisory roles e.g. field assistant, computer operators etc.
- Job card to include info on disability status & category
- Not less than 3% of the resources at all levels to be allocated for works specifically

benefiting PwDs as required under section 40 of PwD Act 1995

- Standard wages to PwDs – Should be Time based not Task based.
- Appropriate work and task to be designed and assigned to PwDs.
- Creation of barrier free accessible public assets. E.g. ramps in schools, hospitals etc.
- Social Audit, Vigilance committee to include information on about PwDs also.

He further said that there is a need to make contact with the Disability Commission on District and Central Level. He concluded by the following statement as food for thought *"Let's see the ability of disabled people and not their disability."*



Sensitisation to Disability issues

Ms. Nivedita of NCEDP shared her views on sensitization of disability issues. She said our primary domain is to create awakening about disabled. Disability is a very cross cutting subject worldwide. People talk about children and women rights but not about disabled women and disabled children. In India people at grassroots have no information about the facilities provided by the Government. There is a need of leadership to level to take fight for rights of disabled.



Later Ms. Sudha from Deepshikha asked why is it that a disabled person is rarely visible in public places, like say, a movie hall? It is primarily because they are not able to access these places due to their physical limitations. To overcome this, Government in 1995 enacted Disabilities Act which specifies 3% reservation of persons with disabilities in all government jobs and social security schemes. It also specifies for providing special facilities for access and inclusion, eg , ramp in schools and public places, separate water taps, etc.

Schemes in Jharkhand:

- Monthly pension for severe and profoundly disabled RS 150/-
- Bus pass for specific purposes and limited areas.
- Scholarship ranges from Rs. 50-250/- depending on the schooling.
- Special financial assistance for higher education Rs. 3000/- per anum.
- Marriage allowance ranging from 7000-10000/- depending on type of disability.
- Unemployment pension ranging from 200-500/- per month depending on qualification.
- Self employment loan ranging from 2-5 lakh with subsidy.
- Assistive devises.
- Medical treatment.
- All social security schemes of the union GOVT are applicable.

For prevention of disability she focused on certain points as:-

- advocacy for immunization mother and children.

- creation of facilities for disabled
- Priority must be given to them by the Govt. at research centre, recreation centre, at home and in business.

Dr. Alka Nizami from Deepshikha talked about the prevailing myths regarding disability. For welfare of disabled people, law has been made both at Centre and State level. Disabled persons are looked upon with pity than being considered as an equal. This is a worldwide phenomenon. So there is a need to change this attitude. Citing the example of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, she said that hardly any of the registered children were disabled. These people must be given 3% reservation. She urged the NGOs to provide disabled people with employment in their organisation. She urged all the participants to call them as Differently Abled and not as Disabled.



She called upon participants to join the NCEDP network for advocacy for the cause of disability. Deepshikha is the nodal agency in Jharkhand working on this issue, as a part of NCEDP network.



