

POOREST AREAS CIVIL SOCIETY PROGRAM

PEER LEARNING WORKSHOP

(19 – 21 September, 2006)

**Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Auditorium,
Jhansi**

Organized by

Development Alternatives, Taragram, Pahuj, Jhansi, U P

Supported by: DFID

**Management Consultants
Development Alternatives – Price Waterhouse Coopers**

Foreword

In September 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, world leaders of 189 nations, agreed to a set of timebound and measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. Placed at the heart of the global agenda, they are now called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Summit's Millennium Declaration also outlined a wide range of commitments in human rights, good governance and democracy. The plans and activities outlined in the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) of the Government of India also lays special emphasis on the achievement of the MDGs. The Department for International Development (DFID), British Government is supporting Government of India for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. After elaborate discussions between the two governments a programme was formulated, to empower people by building their capacities and bring them above the poverty line. This programme is known as Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) programme.

Under this programme, the Planning commission, Government of India, along with DFID initially identified 100 districts in India, judged to be the "poorest" on the basis of identified socio-economic indicators and decided to work for the upliftment of these districts. The PACs programme is working on five themes - Local Self Governance (LSG), Women Empowerment (WE), Self Help (SH), Policy Advocacy (PA) and Social Cohesion (SC). The geographical coverage of the PACS Programme is in extremely backward regions of central and eastern India spanning six states: Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand and is being managed jointly by Development Alternatives for programmatic issues and Price Waterhouse Coopers for financial and operational concerns.

Uttar Pradesh is one of the first states to initiate the PACS programme. In UP, the programme is operational in 20 districts wherein intervention is being done in 100 blocks through 48 projects having 124 implementing partners. A total of 2636 villages in 1356 Gram Panchayats are covered by the programme. In order to learn from the experiences and activities undertaken in 3 years of the existence of the PACS programme in Uttar Pradesh and for the development of the future action plan a 3 day State Level Peer Learning Workshop (19th – 21st September 2006) was organised at Jhanshi. The consultation provided a platform for various stakeholders and Civil Society Organizations to become sensitive towards empowerment of the poor in the State. The consultation also gave an opportunity to take the voices of the grass root to the policy makers.

Kiran Sharma
Programme Director
PACS Programme

Background:

The Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) programme started in the year 2001 with the aim of strengthening Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and empowering communities in order to enhance the entitlement realization. The programme also aimed at developing strong base of community based organisations which can act as the bridge between the government service providers community representatives. The Programme is entering into its maturity phase and has now engaged more than 500 civil society organisations into its umbrella.

U.P. programme is the largest programme among the six states wherein 126 CSOs are working as partner organisations. One of the key feature of the programme is sharing of learning and experiences leading to knowledge building and eventually leading to the effective and efficient management of this knowledge. The programme design provides the forum of Peer Learning Workshop where in representatives of all CSOs come together and share their experiences and learnings. Till date U.P. programme has successfully seen six PLWs and the Seventh Peer Learning Workshop was organized from 19021 September 2006 at Deendayal Upadhyay Sabhagar Auditorium at Jhansi. The workshop saw the congregation of 126 CSO representatives along with the other representatives from civil society, people's representatives and government representatives.

First two day programme was focused on sharing of experience and learnings from the CSO partners and the last day programme was dedicated on drawing the recommendations for the draft rural habitat policy, an DA-SDC led initiative. Following paragraphs illustrate the key deliberations during the PLW:

DAY 1 – Pre Lunch

Inaugural Session

At the very outset Shri. Raghvesh Ranjan, from Taragram welcomed the chief guest Pt. Shri. Vishwanath Sharma (former Member of Parliament, Jhansi – Lalitpur region) along with all the guests and the all the participants. He also offered the Program Director, Ms. Kiran Sharma to take anchor the show. After receiving a bouquet of flowers from the Program Director, was the chief guest formally inaugurated the workshop by lighting the lamp.

Inaugural Ceremony

Welcome Address: Ms Kiran Sharma, Programme Director (PACS) Programme

The workshop started with the key note address by the PACS Programme Director, Ms. Kiran Sharma, who stressed on further strengthening the CBOs so that a platform can be created for sustaining the project interventions. In her address, she briefed the gathering about the progress, coverage and phasing out strategy of the program. She informed the house that the project was nearing its completion, As on date the project was being implemented through 124 CSOs in 20 poorest districts. The strategy was to wind up in its first phase in June 2007, 30% of the projects in June 2007, 30% in October 2007 and finally the remaining 40% in December 2007.

She drew the attention of the house to the fact that the time available to show the impact of the project was merely 9 months and schemes like NREGA could be very important to include into our action plans.

A gist of the Action plan is as follows:

- SHGs to be made literate
- Child rights and education to be focused upon
- Include on agenda the issues related to rights of the disabled and the physically challenged and help inclusion into mainstream
- SHGs initiatives in areas of livelihood to be strengthened for sustainability
- Strengthen Local self governance and interface the local groups with local administration
- Strategize to effectively implement the NREGS and document the same
- She appealed to the CSOs to join hands with VANI and UPVAN network who were advocating NREGS in collaboration with PACS in the state.
- Called the attention of the house to natural calamities like drought and Floods etc. especially in Bundelkhand in UP where there are reports of farmers committing suicide due to drought. Therefore there is a need to develop packages to address specific needs and advocate for the same
- She also expressed her unhappiness over the fact that many people did not arrive on time for the workshop and stressed on the time frame available to achieve the desired goals.

The second speaker in the inaugural session was Mr. Santosh K Dwivedi State Anchor-UP PACS Programme. Mr Dwivedi spoke about the present status of PACS programme interventions in UP and the progress which the Programme has made and what are the challenges which the Programme

In his presentation he explained that the program in UP has touched the lives of 2.5 lac people from marginalized sections of the 20 poorest districts. He explained the focus thematic areas as:

- Developing local community based groups
- Improved Local Self Governance (rural and urban)
- Women Empowerment

- Social Cohesion
- Legal
- Self help

He further explained the challenges as a) strengthening CSO govt linkage and b) sustaining the CBO network created during the course of implementation of the program. He appealed to the gathering to use the 3 day workshop to develop a strategy to meet the above challenges.

Next speaker in the inaugural session was Shri. Hargobind Kushwaha, Chairman Jhanshi Development Authority.

He elaborated and discussed the situation of administrative set up in the state, women, farmers and thereby the issues for development. He also reminded the house the loans the government had borrowed 77 lac crores of foreign sources for development of the various marginalized sections in the state. And also that the govt spend 6000 crores for development schemes in the state. However, the poor remain untouched and their situations unaltered.

He also emphasized on the following facts and urged house to take them into their agenda for discussions during the workshop:

- that in India of the 5 lac 76 thousand village 50% villages had no source of safe drinking water, which is a basic requirement for survival
- women are largely still illiterate and the statistics misleading
- women are not even considered in par with regular labour their wages are low and they are called *Reja* in Bundelkhand
- there has been drought in Bundelkhand for the past 10 years
- farmers are in great debt traps
- lack of effective result oriented localized schemes in agriculture

He compared the India situation with that of America where only 17% of the population were engaged in agriculture and still had enough for consumption and export while in India, 83% were engaged in agriculture and we still import from Australia and other nations.

Pt. Shri. Vishwanath Sharma (former MP Jhansi – Lalitpur Region, eminent Social worker and Chairman Vaidyanath Industries)

Presidential address of the inaugural session was delivered by Pt. Shri. Vishwanath Sharma (former Member of Parliament, Jhansi – Lalitpur region and eminent Social worker and Chairman Vaidyanath Industries) who spoke about doing tangible work at the grass roots for making a change in the lives of poor. He also pointed the need for Corporate Social Responsibility of the industrial houses and opportunity for the CSOs to join hand with the business houses for social development. He explained that the migration for want of employment by the poor not only deprives the their children the opportunity for education but also makes them vulnerable to incurables diseases they

contact during their stay in the place of work. Therefore he suggested that the cultivation of medicinal herbs be promoted and engage women and farmers to generate income. The focus of his address was on water harvesting, particularly for the drought hit areas like Bundelkhand. He stressed the need for in-situ moisture conservation as a low cost sustainable strategy.

Vote of Thanks to the panel members of the inaugural session was given by Wg. Cdr. Pramode Sahney, Senior Advisor Taragram, Development Alternatives Jhanshi and expressed that the discussions during the three days of the workshop will be useful for bringing development issues related to Bundelkhand to the fore front.

Technical Session 1 – Presentation by CSOs

The first technical session was to elicit the CSO learning on the front of CBOs. While facilitating the session, Mr. Amit Mehrotra highlighted the richness of PACS programme, through which diverse CBOs have been formed which provide an opportunity for learning and replication. This rich experience was shared by the CSO partners themselves. Key highlights of the CSO presentation is illustrated in the following bullets:

- ***SHG Led Adult Literacy Model - for Women Empowerment - by New Public School Samiti (NPSS)***

NPSS is working in partnership with PACS in 75 villages of ravine affected and dacoit infested villages of Bundelkhand along river Yamuna. It has formed 375 women SHGs with more than 4000 members. These groups are working as credit groups and also working as extension groups for dry land farming and improved techniques of animal husbandry. These SHGs have emerged as the platform for taking up the adult literacy campaign. NPSS is aiming to make illiterate SHG members functionally literacy for their dynamic empowerment process. For that purposed it has designed customised literacy primers for the project/region. NPSS has built the capacity of its own team on adult literacy principles/ methods/ tools. 75 Saksharta Sakhis have been identified who are working as literacy animators and about 600 literacy volunteers have stood up and making their contributions. The approach is Each One – Teach Ten. In each village 7-10 literacy classes are in operation. About 50-60% SHG members are attending classes in each class. Classes are to span for 200 Hrs out of which 25% have been completed. Individual monthly progress on reading, writing and arithmetic is being tracked – Photo Record

of Every Individual available in Hard Copies. Soft Copies being prepared. This process has resulted into more than 2000 illiterate members of SHGs as functionally literate. Due to very strong atmosphere created by SHG members' literacy campaign, more than 3000 other illiterate women of the concerned villages have joined literacy classes. Key emerging signs which are showing success of this programme are:

- SHG due to their literacy knowledge are now participating actively in local planning and monitoring development initiatives through PRIs
- Literacy strategy is creating a ripple effect
- Adopting multi-dimensional approach for their livelihood enhancement
- Local level Knowledge Management Platform
- National Literacy Mission and State Literacy Mission Authority is closely watching this model for drawing learnings.

▪ ***Chingari Group - for accessing rights – by Akhil Bhartiya Samaj Sewa Sansthan (ABSSS)***

Chingari Sangathan was set-up by ABSSS on 1st January 2000 to break the 'Culture of Silence' and 'Public Inertia' for realizing rights & entitlements. Chingari Sangathan is a pressure group of Young and enthusiastic people and women from Dalit, Tribals, Down Trodden, Queries & Agricultural labourers .They are most deprived, marginalized and exploited sections of bundelkhand region. Vision of Chingari group is - Fighting Terror, Protecting Dignity Empowering Poor, Assuring Livelihoods and People's Lives. Its mission is To work for the overall empowerment of the most marginalized, exploited and deprived section of the society. Aims and objectives of this CBO are:

- To build capacities of the communities to equip them in struggle against discrimination, injustice and atrocities.
- Awareness generation, organizing them for joint & collective actions, information dissemination so that they have the requisite information to fuel their actions.
- Increase access to basic resources, entitlements for marginalized communities.

- Work towards an increased awareness of rights and their realization on an ultimate goal.
- Advocacy for the improvement in their status.
- Regeneration of self esteem, confidence that they can make a difference to their lives.
- Facilitating their reassertion are all constituents to help achieve our mission.

The issues which are being covered by Chingari group are –

Food Security & Right to Food	Entitlement Issues	Physical Violence	Government Scheme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Target Public Distribution System ▪ Day Meal ▪ Antyodaya Scheme ▪ Annapurna Scheme ▪ Food for Work Scheme ▪ Mat`ernity Benefit Scheme ▪ Social Benefit Scheme ▪ ICDS ▪ Starvation Death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land right and entitlement ▪ Minimum wages ▪ Deception loan ▪ Wages from Forest Department ▪ Forest Animal ▪ Non Timber Forest Produce ▪ Mines and Mine Workers ▪ Lack of Livelihood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women violence ▪ Acute exploitation ▪ Police atrocities ▪ Bonded labour ▪ Child labour ▪ Death caused by bitten, dynamites in mines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education ▪ Health and Drinking Water ▪ <i>Kanya Dhan</i>, Marriage Grant, Natural calamities schemes ▪ Indira Awas Scheme ▪ Food for Work, Etc.
		<p>Social Exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Untouchability ▪ Social boycott ▪ Atrocities & violence 	<p>Recent Acts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NREGA ▪ RTI

The chingari sangathan is following sequential and organized process while functioning. Key steps of its functioning are –

- Sharing of problems & Survey
- Awareness generation about rights & entitlements
- Identification of issues through Meetings & Group discussion

- Capacity Building of communities
- Application Writing by members.
- Follow-up of applications
- Administration-Community interface (Block to Mandal level).
- Advocacy for issues & problems
- Media Sensitization & Media-Community Interface.
- Dharana, Demonstration, March & Public Meetings.
- Public Awareness Campaign & Legal literacy camps.
- Lawyer-Community Interface.
- Public Hearings and
- Memorandum

Till date 253 chingari sangathans have been formed having 4132 members (2082 female and 2050 male). While success of chingari sangathan is quite huge but some of the key achievements are:

- Construction of Pungari Bridge estimated Rs. 1 Crore.
- Suspension of 22 Kotedars.
- Construction of Pukari Bridge estimated Rs. 6 Crores, 2 Link roads for Chandapura Village, Electrification of the village and 1 J.H. School has been sanctioned for the village.
- Land lease provided to 39 families.
- Reopening of Gandhi Khadi Ashram.
- Unpaid Wages to 40 labourers estimated Rs. 12 thousands.
- Scholarship to 115 students estimated Rs. 34,500.00.
- Unpaid Wages to 295 labourers of 8 villages estimated Rs.1 Lakh 50 Thousands and 200 Qtls. wheat.
- Land lease to 6 families for pot- making.
- Cancellation of fake Electricity bill of 11 families in the village Murwan.
- Unpaid Wages to 45 labourers estimated Rs. 1 Lakh 30 Thousands for Tendu Leaf Plucking in Duguwan.
- Unpaid Wages to 85 labourers estimated 96 Qtl. 49 Kg. and Rs. 19207.00 for the construction of a road in Bagalai and Gonda.
- Rs.1 lakh to Budhiya under Agriculture Accident Insurance Scheme.
- Drought Relief Cheques to 200 families estimated Rs. 1Lakh.

- Scholarship to 40 SC Students estimated Rs. 12,000.00 in the village Bhauti.
- Ration cards to 70 families in the village Saurai.
- Handover of PHC building.
- 41 widow pensions, 28 Old age pension and 12 Handicapped pension have been sanctioned.
- Construction work of the water tank and pipe line has been restarted.
- Work of Canal digging in Gaughatcchani and Baijamau villages.

The group is also facing challenges and difficulties viz. Warnings of inquiry from District administration, Apathy and biasness of District administration, Stay order from the Court, Feudalism and Terror, Lack of willingness of politicians, Politization of issues, Apathy in women issues like moral trafficking.

The future strategy of ABSSS is - Extension, Expansion & Strengthening of Chingari Sangathan as a pressure group at Bundelkhand region, Institutional Development of Chingari Sangathan as a Trade Union, Strengthening of Chingari Sangathan as a Public Advocacy Group & Public Campaign Group, Promotion to Action Based Research for Advocacy and Lobbying, To develop Para Legal Workers/ Social Action Groups/ Social Activist for realizing social justice and entitlements.

▪ ***Producers Group– for IGA- by Self Employed Womens Association (SEWA)***

SEWA has been working in areas of Bacchrawan block of Raibrailley District and Nindura block of Barabanki District closer to capital of U.P Lucknow. It has formed producers association which are groups Born out of SHGs. It is normally 5 member Group having all women members. These groups are trained in chikankari. Till date SEWA has formed 138 producer group which are spread in 46 Gram panchayats of 2 blocks from Barabanki and Rae Bareli.

In the beginning SHGs were formed for saving and credit and a discussion got initiated in the groups for Income Generation Activities (IGA). Discussions also emerged in the group about chikankari. Following which women have been selected for chikankari training, based on their- eye sight, capacity to their spare time for training and willingness to take up the work in future. The next step was providing three months training to the women on chinkari for which discussion were held with panchayat members/Pradhans. Venuehas been identified which was easy to reach

and safe for women, vis. – School building , panchayat bhawan etc. The project team then prepared a list of suitable women and selected master trainer from SEWA also provided training materials. The principal was “earning while learning”.

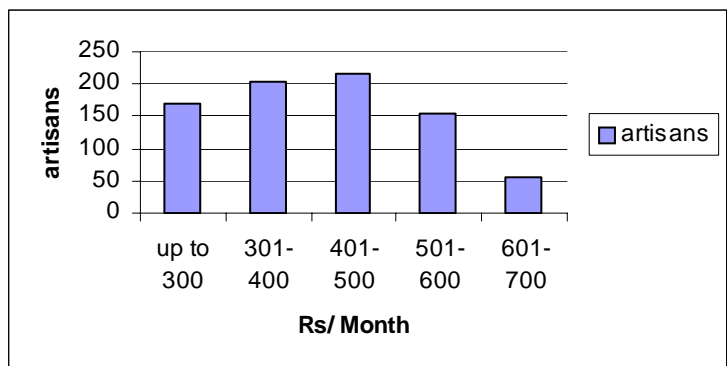
These groups collect raw material i.e. pieces and Other accessories like thread, needle etc

. They are given knowledge of piece rate payment, Time required for completion of job and Collecting issue slips.

Coordination was also done with SEWA supervisor. Quality checking of entire training is done by supervisors who receive payments against issue slips. The groups take up queries with SEWA staff and placing orders for new raw materials. SEWA is also linking these groups with other markets - Receive raw materials from other sources and bargain for a fair price for these groups. Besides IGA these groups are also taking up community led initiatives such as - Promoting enrollment in NREGA, Monitoring PDS services, Participation in Pulse polio, Participation in Mid day meal etc .

Some of the strengths of the producer group is:

- Confidence development because of exposure etc;
- More stake in decision making of family;
- Better bargaining capacity;
- understanding of business;
- Some of them are working independently;
- Able to train others



The next steps are to build the skills of these groups on complex issues such as stitching. Another

strategy is creation of cluster hubs having - cluster of 5 GPs, 15-20 groups in one cluster, Training on cluster management, selling / purchasing point and Linkage with bank/ government programmes. The result of the entire programme is enhanced income level of group members as depicted by bar diagramme above.

- ***Musahar VikasPahal Manch – A platform for empowering most disadvantaged – by ActionAid***

Action Aid is supporting the issue of Musahaar in Maharajganj district of U.P. Musahaars are the lowest rung of society. They were reeling with the problems of hunger, invisibility, low level of literacy and health services and were the most oppressed due to uneven and unlawful social structure. They have been living with voiceless and right less conditions for ages. In order to overcome the same Musahaar vikas Manch has been formed in which feeling of collectivization has been brought, leadership skills have been built and their interface has been established with the panchayat and with the government. By adopting people centered advocacy initiatives their exploitation issues have been brought in front of panchayat, government and civil society. For fighting their issues grin banks have been created and efforts have been created for livelihood creation. For improving the health conditions of the Musahaars revolving fund has also been created for them. Musahaars- *panchhat yatra, Musahaar Man Samman Pad Yatra, Yatra* for seeking work, and mega events have been organized. For enabling this Musahaar Manch has been formed as the democratic body which is bult on the principals of transparency for which social audits are being done. The future direction of this CBO is to know the functioning of government departments, gaining knowledge of laws, policies and acts, focus on the newer techniques of communication and management, networking with such other CBOs and internal democratization and decision making process.

- ***Babu Bahini Manch - for Flood Preparedness – by Purvanchal Gramin Vikas Samiti (PGVS)***

Poorvanchal Gramin Vikas Sansthan (PGVS) has been working 125 villages of five blocks of four flood affected districts of central and eastern U.P. In this programme it has formed a CBO- Babu Bahini Manch (BBM). BBM is a group of children in the age group of 11-17 years, who belong to the same village. The group has been formed keeping gender balance in view. The principal behind this CBO is that - Junior youth are more sensitive towards learning, Junior youth are the future generation, Junior youth are the change agent for sustainable development and BBM is a platform for youth empowerment. BBM has been organizing different activities viz, School Chalo Abhiyaan Rally, Debate on disaster management and development issues, Role plays – social abuses, education, health, vaccination, SPHERE standards and disaster preparedness etc., VACCINATION of children & women, Awareness rallies – on pre disaster preparedness, IEC tools- “Collage” making

from waste news paper– on different development issues, IEC materials – Slogans for community awareness (developed by BBM), IEC songs of community development – developed by BBM children, Mock drill presentation – by BBM, Environment group of BBM – presenting role play on environment protection and Mashal rally by – BBM children. These whole set of activities are being done in flood affected villages not only for the preparedness during the flood periods but also for leading towards the overall development of the village.

▪ **Women SHGs – into Eri Silk Production – By Shramik Bharti**

Mr. Sanjay Vijayvargiya of Shramik Bharti talked about the Shramik Bharti led initiative in which women members are now doing the cultivation and processing related activities for the production of eri-silk. Necessary training and linkage has been provided to the women groups by Shramik Bharti with collaborating with National and State Silk Development Board.

▪ **Vridha Sangha - for Protecting the rights of Aged persons – by Helpage India**

The next presentation was by HelpAge India, which has been working on the issue of aged along with its three partners in 300 villages. The objective of the programme is 1) to Improve the awareness level and direct access of poor older persons to social security, food security, and habitat security 2) Advocacy for the concerns of the aged, both in the local government

as well as at the district, state and national levels and widen the agenda of ageing with other CSOs in PACS States. HI-PACS Programme. Helpage presented the level of accessibility of various

DISTRICTS	PENSION	ANNAPOOR NA	INDRAAWAS
BANDA	6.4%	19%	10%
UNNAO	4%	16%	7%
BARABANKI	10%	22%	8%

services by the aged persons which is presented in the matrix on the right hand side. It also presented its achievements according to which total 60 vridha sanghas have been formed which has facilitated access of 595 old age pensions, 659 antyodaya cards and 41 indira awas to the aged persons.

▪ **Ajivika Adhikar Manch - a CBO federation for sustaining Livelihood Opportunities – by Sohratgarh Environmental Society (SES)**

Sohratgarh Environment Society which is working in 36 villages of Jogia block of Siddarth Nagar district gave the presentation of its efforts. In its project it has formed

9 CBOs having representatives from – 33 women SHGs, 36 farmer groups, 36 PRIs, 36 paravets, 35 dais, 25 grain bank management committees, 3 seed bank management committees, 36 rescue groups (for floods), and 36 health volunteers. Above these CBOs- Ajivika Adhikar Samiti has been formed which is having 3 representative from each of the CBO i.e. total 27 persons are the members of AAS. The activities of AAS are to support weak CBOs, making efforts for sustaining the project Interventions, raising voice against exploitation, working as the pressure group, giving advocacy support on the flood issues, working as knowledge platform, ensuring that the benefits of government programmes is reaching to the titled persons. This federation of CBO meets at the block level on quarterly basis and discussed revenue generation for AAS and initiation of newer IGA among the CBOs.

▪ ***Farmer's Group - for Livelihood Creation– by FORRAD***

FORRAD is working in Bundelkhand region with its seven partner organisations. One of the key issue addressed by the organisation is improving the livelihood opportunities among the farmer community. For that purpose it has been forming farmer groups. FORRAD network has formed 65 farmers group in 65 gram panchayats comprising over 700 farmers. The interventions through these groups are enabling innovations and practice of appropriate technologies through capacity building, farmer group Management and forging linkages with the technical institutions and agriculture universities. The results which have been achieved through these interventions are - Intensification & diversification, increase in productivity, development of seed banks, initiation of integrated pest management and plant nutrient management practices, starting of organic farming and sustainable agriculture practices.

For institutional strengthening key steps which have been adopted are as follows:

- Identification of needy farmers
- Organizing them into groups
- Framing of norms
- Federation of groups
- Linking groups with information centres, district level forums, PRIs, line departments and other national forums.
- Enabling participation in national themes.

Presently FORRAD and its partners are focusing on creation of more groups, extension of good practices, demonstration of yield increase and improving economic proposition. During the

presentation FORRAD invited three small and marginal farmers who spoke about the benefits received by them with the support of project.

DAY 1 –Post Lunch

Technical Session 2 – Right to Information (RTI)

The session started with a skit presentation on Right to Information by Bundelkhand Gramodyog Sewa Sansthan. The folk media team demonstrated how they are disseminating the importance of RTI among the masses. Following the skit presentation Mr. Ramashankar Gupta from BGSS shared his experiences of getting information from the Government of India department, using the RTI.

Followed by the skit presentation, Mr. Manish Sidodia from Kabir – Parivartan, New Delhi presented the initiatives taken by their organisation on the issue of RTI since 6th PLW with PACS partners and about the initiatives of PACS partners during their campaign “**Ghoos ko Ghoosa**”pay no Brbes. The session began by explaining that the campaign started from the last PLW in Jhansi, which educated the partners about the right and inspired them to carry it forward. This campaign was carried out during 1 to 15 July 2006 in various parts of the country. The whole experience was shared through a case study and film. The participants of the campaign were duly trained in Delhi. Press conferences, film shows, meetings and rallies were organized to provide visibility to the campaign.

The results of the cases registered during the campaign popularized the movement and mobilized larger participation. Mr. Manish Sisodia spoke about the amendments being proposed by the government, which are likely to minimize its effectiveness in checking corruption in administration. PACS partners PANI,ABSSS and PGSS shared their about their efforts on this score during the week long campaign.

PANI shared the process followed on PRI along with its 242 member organisations of 28 district through its SAATHI network. Key processes followed are given in the following bullets:

- Orientation Of SATHI Members at 17th April (Lokshakti Project Partners meet)
- Passed resolution in SATHI monthly meeting on 28 April 2006
- RTI Core team formation on 6 May 2006
- Training on RTI Act to NGO Head and Workers (19/20 May 2006)
- Core team Meeting (26 May 2006)
- SATHI Monthly Meeting (28 May 2006)
- Strategic meet with Core team and SATHI Members (30 May 2006)

- Participation in National level Workshop on RTI at Parivartan New Delhi 1 June 2006
- Meeting and liaison with District Administration (5-10 May 2006)
- Training to SATHI Members and Volunteers (5th June 2006)
- RTI workshop with SATHI Ambedker Nagar (11 June 2006)
- Meeting with District PIOS and APIOS with SATHI Ambedker Nagar (12 June 2006)
- RTI workshop with Social Work Department Dr R.M.L. Awadh Uni. Faizabad (15 June 2006)
- RTI workshop with University Students (19 June 2006)
- RTI workshop with NGOs (21 June 2006)
- Core team Meeting on 24 June 2006
- RTI Rally 26 June 2006 in Faizabad
- Meeting- SATHI District Forum Faizabad 28 June 2006
- RTI Awareness Camp 1-15 July 2006 at Press Club, Faizabad
- RTI Appeal Day 16 Aug.2006

The key achievements of this campaign was highlighted by PANI as under:

- 15 Days Camp at Press Club, Faizabad
- 406 applications filed during the Camp
- 435 applications were draft and submitted to concerning depts..
- 1000 Visitors came at camp
- 15 orientation programmes for volunteers were organized in Faizabad
- 300 oriented volunteers came forward for campaigning
- 32 organization participated in RTI campaign
- 40 volunteers contributed more than 350 work days
- More than 600 phone calls regarding RTI campaign
- 20000 Pamphlet distributed
- Daily media coverage
- Appreciable support from district administration, Faizabad
- Nice collaboration with print and electronic media during the campaign
- Replication of learning and experiences in other districts (Azamgarh, Mau, Mahrajganj and Pratapgarh)

The next session of the workshop focused on an important issue of Disability, which is being increasingly being highlighted and discussed as the cross cutting issue in the PACS programme. Dr. Ram K. Goel and Dr. Madhu Goel talked on the legal rights of disabled people during their presentation.

- 68% of the disabled are forced to work at very low wages
- Only 1/3 of the educated disabled find employment
- Facilities available at public places are not disabled friendly
- Lack of awareness about legal rights of the disabled among the disabled

They highlighted how their organisation National Disability Network has been working with the government institutions – offices, railway stations, hospitals, schools, etc. on developing disabled friendly infrastructure within their campuses. One of their presentation also highlighted, how are disabled persons getting engaged in different employment generation activities such as- vehicle repairing, embroidery, sale jobs, running PCOs, etc. All partners were then asked to take up the issue of disability within their own programmes as the cross cutting issue.

Technical Session 4 - Holistic Development of Bundelkhand Region: An Institutional Perspective by Development Alternatives Jhanshi

The next session was by Mr. Ragvesh Ranjan on Holistic Development of Bundelkhand Region – an institutional perspective of Development Alternatives group. Mr. Ranjan talked about the strategic focus of DA on sustainable development efforts in all the 13 districts of Bundelkhand falling under UP and MP. He talked about three principles – social equity, environmental quality and economic efficiency. DA's thrust in Bundelkhand region is on Natural Resource Management -- Land & Water management, Farming System & Agri-based Livelihoods ; Community Institution & Capacity Building -- Community Groups, Thrift Credit, Meeting, Training, Workshop; Livelihood -- Micro-Enterprise, Livelihood Products & Services; Networking & Convergence -- Line Departments, PRI, Govt. Projects, SBU's Programme. He pointed that DA is committed to cover 10 districts, 55 blocks, 8000 villages of Bundelkhand thus impacting 0.5 m people directly and 2.5 m indirectly. DA sees -- Network of 300 strong and vibrant institutions established; Livelihood opportunities for 500,000 HHs created; Basket of 60 livelihood enterprises operational; Agriculture productivity doubles and Successful model for development available for replication throughout the country.

Strategic options of DA group would be to build upon the field presence, goodwill and network created in MP and create a field presence and more visible goodwill and network in UP.

While the session was on, District Magistrate- Jhansi Mr. L.venkateshwarlu joined the session. In his address he lauded the efforts by DA and its partners in improving the lives of poor.

Technical Session 5 - Technology and Action for Rural Advancement

Last session of the day was a presentation by Mr Arun Singh Panwar from Technology and Action for Rural Advancement (TARA) group on the role of simple technologies for rural advancement. The presentation pointed that the vision of the DA groups is **“To innovate and deliver mechanisms that can create sustainable livelihood on a large scale.”** The strategy for this focuses on – creating sustainable enterprise through the application of sound technological, environmental and market practices. He talked about different technological options with the DA group on – **Building Material** – Micro concrete roofing tiles technology, Compressed Earth block technology, Fly Ash technology, Concrete block technology and Eco Kiln; **Textiles** – Hi-tech handlooms, **Renewable Energy** – Bruquetted fuel and DESI Power, **Environmental Products** – Water and Air testing kits and **Waste Utilization** – Handmade paper technology and paper recycling technology.

DAY 2 – Pre Lunch

Focus of the second day of PLW was on different themes and issues, which are being taken by PACS such as – Dalit issues, NREGS, Gender Issues, Impact capturing through Video Documentation, DA ISRO – VRC initiative .

Technical Session 1 - Dalit Focus in PACS programme

The first session of the day focused on dalit issues in which different PACS partners and other CSO members highlighted the importance of dalit issues in the developmental programmes. A panel chaired by Sri Ramesh Bhai of – Sarvodaya Ashram and consisting of members Mr. Ram Kumar from Dynamic Action Group, Mr. Kapil Dev from PRDTI, Mr. Bhagwat Prasad from ABSSS, Mr. Javed Rasool of Trust Consulting were

gave their reflections on the dalit issues and how these are being addressed in the PACS programme by CSOs. The consensus after the end of the session was to take the way as suggested by Father of the Nation Gandhiji and Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar of inclusion of dalits into the mainstream of development initiatives and CSOs till now have played an important role.

Technical Session 2 - National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)

Second session of second day was progress made by PACS partners in mobilizing National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. The session started with a skit programme by folk media team of SEWA which aptly demonstrated the effective communication strategy on the issue of NREGS.

In the session IGSSS partner organisations – Harriet Benson Memorial Hospital and Society for Pragati Bharat gave their presentation on the efforts done during the NREGS week. The partner informed the house that when they had gone to the villages with the information about the scheme, they faced number of hurdles and wrong messages in the field viz., people were of the opinion that those getting enrolled in the NREGS programme would be sent to Iran-Iraq and hence the registration process was very slow; money was charged from the people who were getting their registrations done, job cards were not being issued to the persons interested to take up employment work and so on. With the support of PACS programme – *Saathi Haath Badhana* the awareness drive was conducted from 14-21 July 2006 during which through different IEC tools awareness and proper information about the scheme was given. The overall result of this exercise was very positive and as a result the level of registration rose from 950 to 1640, in the project villages of Jakhora and from 123 to 964 in villages of Birdha block.

Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan also shared their experience in NREGS programme.

The next presentation of the session was by Mr Anurag Mishra coordinator UPVAN from Vani and UPVAN on its efforts done for NREGS in the State of UP. The presentation highlighted problems faced in the entire campaign as lack of political will, lack of programme guidelines at the state level, lack of clarity of government functionaries related to this scheme and non creation of employment board. The presentation also highlighted some of district related problems which are – lack of availability of registration forms, limiting the number of job cards per village, lack of clarity among the

district level officials, lack of clarity while preparing the perspective plans, lack of training, limited communication about the schemes. The bottlenecks at the block level are – lack of complete information about the scheme at the village level, lack of sufficient official at the village for the execution of the scheme, biased approach in making the job cards, lack of clarity among the masses about the scheme.

In order to address the bottlenecks and speedup the implementation of the scheme UPVAN and VANI are making joint efforts in 22 districts of the state. This campaign is divided in four stages – 1) Wide scale awareness, 2) Empowering Panchayat and soliciting their cooperation, 3) In the gram sabha organizing monitoring and social audit and 4) social and political advocacy.

The campaign in eastern U.P. is covering seven districts where in district orientation workshops have been organized and through the workers of 25 CSOs 1.5 pamphlets have been distributed in 75 villages. In Azamgarh district a *Zan Sunwai* programme was also organized. In Sonbhadra about 2000 tribal people organized *dharna* and *pradarshan* and have sought employment. The Bundelkand and central U.P. programme is covering six and nine districts respectively, where in similar kind of approaches have been followed, as were done in the Eastern U.P.

Some of the highlights of the programme are as under:

- Speddup in the process of issuance of job cards,
- Circulation of information at the district level,
- Preparation of guidelines in Hindi and initiation of its distribution,
- Association with Media,
- Forging of network on the issue and
- With the close monitoring and social audit malpractices have been curtailed.

Mr. Ashok Bharti of NACDOR shared its experiences of Rojgar Adhikar Yatra which it carried out with PACS programme support in the month of June & July 2006. Dr. Yogesh Kumar from SAMARTHAN Bhopal shared its requirement of data from PACS partners of NREGs Districts to compile an advocacy document. Mr. Pooran Chandra Pandey , CEO Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) New Delhi shared its efforts with respect to Civil

Society Networking and its efforts with respect to NREGs in the PACS programmes states.

DAY 2 –Post Lunch

Technical Session 3 - Gender Issues – Session anchored by Ms. Anju Dubey

After lunch hour Ms. Anju Dubey from Centre for Social Research and Gender Training Institute New Delhi shared that the PACS Programme seeks to empower millions of poor people living in around a hundred of India's poorest districts so that they can effectively realise their rights. The programme aims to achieve this by strengthening Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working for the poor in these districts. She shared that 50% of the poorest of the poor don't have access to and/or control over resources and decision making bodies and processes. Thus GTI's strategy is to gender sensitization.

In PACS programme Gender was largely seen as dealing only with women's issues. The senior member of the CSO's observed that the projects and project activities are already well defined and they are being carried out within the planned framework and did not know where and how gender figured into them. The staffing pattern of the organization showed that women are mostly at lower levels and at higher levels their participation is merely symbolic. The limitations were termed as practical problems of not finding enough women in the area to take up responsibilities at the higher levels of the organization. The organizations didn't have any clearly worked out Gender policy. No clear resource allocation to ensure gender mainstreaming e.g. it was largely on the project staff to decide where to include/ exclude women. Therefore, women's participation was not free from personal biases, stereotyped thinking and patriarchal values.

In this backdrop Gender training have been done in the state. The purpose of the gender-training workshop was to improve the knowledge, attitudes and skills of development workers and build capacities of CSOs so that: gender issues are mainstreamed and integrated in the development process. This was done at three levels: individual, program/project and organizational.

There were two groups of participants -- Senior level functionaries comprised of Directors, Secretaries and Chief Executive Officer of the Community Based Organizations and Middle Level Functionaries comprised of Project Managers/Coordinators, Field coordinator, Finance Managers/Officers.

The training workshops have resulted into better understanding about Gender, how to mainstream gender in the programme, gender roles and responsibilities. She informed that GTI has drafted a draft Gender policy document which will be shared with all the partners and partners can do necessary customization in that as per the organizational requirements. Further she added that very soon GTI will start followup visits for ensuring that Gender issue get due focus in the organizational and in the programme level.

Technical Session 4 - Sanitation – an important Women Issue – By D.Satya Suya

This session focused importance of sanitation in the lives of women. Ms.D Satya Suya of Knowledge Links highlighted some of the facts of sanitation vis-à-vis women as given under:

- Majority instances of eve teasing and rape take place when women go in search for private locations for defecation
- 80% stomach related diseases amongst rural women is caused since they postpone attending their natural calls till the dusk- UNICEF study.
- 1 child dies of diarrhoea in every 2 minutes
- Lack of toilet facilities in schools lead to drop out of adolescent girls- the reverse increased enrollment in an experiment in Bangladesh
- Easy access to water and sanitation facilities for women has a positive effect on their income- proves a study by IRC

She said that Better Water and Sanitation facilities have a direct and positive relationship with livelihood – proves a study conducted by International Resource Center (IRC), Netherlands. It was informed to the house that Availability of water and sanitation facilities to SHG women near their habitations saves 2.5 hours of a women due to which Women gets additional time to invest in the Income Generation Activity undertaken by the group which inturn leads to additional time invested by the group and makes them earn surplus profits hence increasing the income of each member.

Shri. L. Venkateshwarulu, District Magistrate, Jhansi was present during the session .

Shri. L Venkateshwarulu, showed keen interest in the workshop. He not only assured govt support for any intervention but also raised certain fundamental issues pertaining to gender inequalities in our social milieu.

- Why should only the son have the right to do the last rites of the parents, why not daughters
- Why can't women be pujaris at temples/ or why can't women offer prayers in the mosque
- He also stressed that like the presentation by Ms. Satya explained, if awareness was sufficiently generated among common people regarding cleanliness and safe drinking water the general standard and quality of life would improve considerably.

He urged the participating CSOs to take these discussions forward in their areas and ask their District Administration for support under the Total Sanitation Campaign for construction of Sanitation of units in the Rural areas.

Technical Session 5 - Impact capturing through Video Documentation by Piyush Chakravarty from AADHAAR Mumbai

Mr. Piyush Chakravarty from AADHAAR Mumbai shared about how to capture impacts of Development efforts and showcased its film of Srijan MP PACS Programme which he filmed for the CSO to capture and convey impacts of CSO efforts.

Technical Session 6- DA – ISRO – VRC Initiative by Dr Joshi from ISRO Nagpur.

Dr Joshi from Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Nagpur shared about the DA – ISRO – VRC initiative through which gains of Information Communication Technology can be taken into Rural areas of the Country. Village Resource Centre (VRC) is a concept through which CSOs can establish VRCs in their work areas and serve the Rural population with the facilities of Tele Medicine , Natural Resources Management Services, etc.

Open House

The last session of the second day was an open house session in which all participants were invited to share/ raise any issues which concerns them. Mr. Ramashankar Gupta, Ms. Asha Singh, Mr. B.P. Pandey , Mr Abhimanyu Singh, expressed their views and suggested that the CBOs session be given more time as it's a learning which partners can make use of in their respective work areas.

DAY 3 –Group Work on Draft Rural Habitat Policy

The last day's session was facilitated by Ms. Zeenat Niyazi. The session focused on draft **Rural Habitat Policy** being proposed to Government of India for consideration by Civil Society Organisations. Ms.Zeenat shared the background of the need and the process of preparing rural habitat policy. She informed the house that the draft policy document has been made after brainstorming session and is being shared across all regions of the country for eliciting comment on it so as regional and contextual modifications can be made in that. She facilitated a participatory session wherein she sought comments form the CSO partners on different elements of the policy viz., land access and management, access to finance, legal and regulatory reforms, infrastructural issues, delivery mechanisms, capacity development and technological issues, employment generation opportunities in rural housing, role of different stakeholders, etc.

It was shared that the ROs had been sharing the draft policy with the CSO partners and also in the project villages and on the basis of that U.P. Programme Support Team has drawn up some recommendations which was also presented in the workshop as under:

Directive Principles

In the policy framework we often discuss and make reference to depressed communities and groups and, in the process, wittingly or unwittingly, ignore the democratic process. Any effort in this direction must take cognizance of this lacuna and the habitation planning should be governed by democratic processes.

- The policy shall try to recognise Habitat as a basic natural and human right.
- The policy must be people centered rather citizen centered.
- The policy shall endeavor to build an equitable atmosphere in the village without disturbing the cultural and social rhythm.
- The policy shall aim to develop human resource for employment generation.

Technology

- There is need to have knowledge management on cultural designs/ skills/ materials etc. so that it could provide a clue to the scientific designers.
- Housing designs should be gender/ disabled sensitive.
- Special care should be given to the disaster prone areas.

Areas of Intervention

- The value system and cultural practices of the people should also be studied before giving the shape to housing pattern.
- The policy must have some guiding principles with respect to the socio-cultural requirement of each region, raw material availability, aesthetics, skills etc.
- The habitation planning needs to be done based on cluster/ village saturation approach rather beneficiary coverage approach so that comprehensive amenities provisions could be made such as proper provisions of drainage system.
- The policy must facilitate bottom-up planning approach. Each village must do habitation planning at Panchayat level.
- We need to follow traditional habitation patterns and any government supported structures must be in congruence of that.
- It has been experienced that mere provisions of micro drainage system would not solve the problem unless the village waste drains from micro drainage to macro drainage. The policy must direct the concerned authorities for mapping of traditional drainage system and its revitalization for addressing the drainage problem.

Stakeholder Participation

- The policy must direct NREGS to broaden its scope of work.
- Local employment requirement must be planned while doing bottom up planning for habitation of a village.

Following the presentation and discussion the whole house was divided into eight groups who worked on different elements of draft policy and provided their recommendations and comments. Each group then made their presentation in the plenary. The recommendations and comments of the groups have been taken by Ms. Zeenat for their incorporation in the draft policy and will be forwarded to Government of India for consideration

DAY 3 –Closure Session

During the final session Member of Parliament of Jhansi – Lalitpur region Mr Chandrapal Singh Yadav was the chief guest. Mr. Santosh K Dwivedi State Anchor- UP PACS Programme presented the brief proceedings of past three days. Ms. Zeenat Niazi from Development Alternatives presented in brief the discussions that were around the Draft of Rural Habitat policy and about the recommendations made to Government of India by

Civil Society Organisations. Mr Ashok Bharti of NACDOR in brief shared the the points discussed in the four State PLWs with respect to Ruarl Habitat Policy and the points for consideration of working committee of Ruarl Housing policy.

In his address Mr Chandrapal Singh Yadav Member of Parliament of Jhansi – Lalitpur region congratulated the PACS program and complimented it for the efforts and impact in the rural communities. He laid stress on the need of Identifying the beneficiaries of the programme as per the programme objectives and ensure that they get the benefits of the programme implementation. He also said that it is very necessary that empowerment of people lasts after the project intervention is completed. The programme must strategise keeping this in view and formulate plans to sustain impacts of efforts underatken during implementation. Once again he applauded the Development Alternatives initiative of organising a State level workshop at Jhanshi in which issues related to Development have been discussed and will benefit the region in the times to come.

The workshop ended by vote of thanks by Mr. Santosh K Dwivedi State Anchor- UP PACS Programme.

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