

8th Peer Learning Workshop-Bihar

A Report

10th-11th April 2007

Patna



Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) Programme

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Preface

Poorest Areas Civil Society Programme (PACS) funded by DFID and managed by Development Alternatives and PricewaterhouseCoopers is one of the largest anti poverty programmes in India. Running with the network of 665 Civil Society Organizations this programme currently covers 93 of the 108 identified poorest districts across 6 states of India.

In Bihar PACS is running in 2940 villages of 117 blocks across 24 districts with the support of the grass root Civil Society Organizations. These villages are spread over the flood prone region of Kosi-Bhagmati belt to the drought prone region of Gaya-Nawada and other poorest districts of the state. PACS till date has been able to form over 4500 women based Self Help Groups with over 62 thousand members. This strong force of women acts as a strong base for implementing any poverty alleviation programme in Bihar.

Every six months, PACS organizes Peer Learning Workshop (PLW) to provide a platform for all the Civil Society Organizations, experts and the policy makers to have a cross learning exercise from across the state and the country. On 10th-11th April 2007 PACS organized the 8th Peer Learning Workshop in Bihar at the state capital-Patna. The Civil Society Organizations in the presence of eminent experts from different fields jointly discussed upon ideas and strategies to increase the pace of development in Bihar. The workshop focused on various anti-poverty issues & programmes such as NREGS, RTI, SHGs livelihood & micro finance, Literacy, Land rights etc.

Through this report, an attempt has been made to cull out the essence of the proceedings of this two-day workshop in a very systematic way. We expect the readers would get an enriching experience of the on going developmental processes in Bihar while going through this report.

Rakesh Jha
State Manager
PACS

Acknowledgements

The Program Support Team would like to thank all those who made the 8th PLW a successful learning platform by sharing their experiences, interacting with each other and mulling over ideas and strategies for developing Bihar.

To start with we express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Baidyanath Mahto, Bihar Rural Development Minister & Mr. Anup Mukerji, Secretary & Commissioner, Rural Development Department - Bihar, for patiently listening to the challenges faced in remote areas and throwing light on the state's policy.

We thank Mr. S. K Mishra, Secretary of State RTI Commission for elaborating on the status of RTI in Bihar and answering to the queries put forward by the PACS-CSOs. We also thank Mr Ravi Shankar representative of Bihar Shiksha Pariyojana Parishad for detailing out the objectives and future plans of SSA. We also appreciate the representatives of ICICI, BRLP and MPRLP for attending the PLW and sharing their experiences.

We thank Dr. A K Basu, PACS-PSC chairman and Mrs Kiran Sharma, PACS Programme Director, Mr. Ajit Sahi, South Asia coordinator of UN Millennium Development Goal Campaign and national coordinator for the PACS communications, for sharing their views in the workshop. We also thank the representative of Tara Haat for elaborating on the Computer Based Literacy program launched for the marginalized SHG members.

We thank our CSO partners for sharing their grass root experiences and making the policy makers and experts aware of ground realities on poverty related schemes. In fact, they are the essential links of the local issues and the ongoing state & national level development processes.

Last but not the least we would like to appreciate media reporters, both electronic and print for covering this event and taking it to the common mass.

Programme Support Team (PST)
Bihar

Inaugural Session

The Peer Learning Workshop started with a welcome address by Mr. Rakesh Jha, State Manager, PACS (Bihar). Thereafter he invited Mr. Baidyanath Mahto, Bihar Rural Development Minister, Mr. Anup Mukerji, Secretary & Commissioner, Rural Development Department, Bihar, Dr. A K Basu, PACS-PSC chairman and Mrs Kiran Sharma, PACS Programme Director to inaugurate the 8th Peer Learning Workshop.



Inauguration-8th PLW

After the inauguration Mrs Kiran Sharma elaborated upon the achievements of PACS starting with the note that Bihar's performance is the best among the other PACS states in India. PACS is running in 93 out of the 108 identified poorest districts of India, with the network of 665 CSOs. It has facilitated in the formation of over 38 thousand CBOs with total membership of about 5.5 lakhs.



Mrs Kiran Sharma PACS programme director speaking on the occasion of 8th PLW

PACS is funded by DFID and is jointly run by Development Alternatives & PricewaterhouseCoopers. Mrs Sharma highlighted that PACS is running in the most interior areas of Bihar; there are villages that are over 5 kilometers away from any kind of road, school or banks. PACS-CSOs are working in coordination with the government agencies for implementing government programmes in these areas.

Carrying forward this succinct and informative speech of Mrs Kiran Sharma, Mr. Rakesh Jha elaborated on the specific achievements of PACS in Bihar.

According to him one of the priority areas of PACS is women empowerment. At the eve of Bihar PRI elections-2006, PACS launched extensive PRI campaign called "Bihar Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan"; the impact of which got reflected in the winning of 2250 marginalized candidates, mostly women, in the elections with the support of PACS. Over 1000 women members gathered at the state capital on 9th April 2007 to share their experiences and highlight the challenges facing Bihar to the state level policy makers.

PACS Fact-File (Bihar)

Total Districts: 24
 CSOs: 104
 Total SHGs: over 4500
 Total membership: over 62,000

Today in Bihar there are over 4500 PACS facilitated SHGs. In Nawada cluster; comprising Nawada, Nalanda Jamui and Banka districts; 33 lakh rupees has been mobilized through the banks as credit. Our CSOs present in across 24 districts have mobilized NBARD and DRDA for more credits and that too in terms of the beneficiaries.



Mr Rakesh Jha, State Manager, PACS (Bihar) elaborating on the achievements of PACS in the state

Linking with the government schemes has been one of the priority areas of PACS. Our CSOs play a significant role in convincing the block level officials and at the same time making the poor aware of the schemes. For instance one of the CSOs has helped 800 families get 32 acres of homestead land. This is just the beginning and all these would continue to grow.

We have also been able to develop partnership with the government on NREGS and its credit goes to Mr. Anup Mukerji with whose initiative the Rural Development Department invited a proposal of training the Panchayat representatives and the block officials through the resource persons of PACS-CSOs. On NREGS we are also preparing a research document through a Delhi based organization called CMS. We are also undertaking training of the CSOs on RTI through CHRI and added to that we are developing state level plan to build a platform with the state commission of Right to Information for the suitable implementation of this scheme. To stop hunger deaths we have tied with the food security commission of the Supreme Court, which is conducting a survey in the poorest districts of Bihar.

We have also helped the smaller CSOs get trained on Fund Raising. Our SHG members are from the most deprived castes and we have planned to make them literate through the Computer Based Training programme. We have established 67 centers and through them we expect to train at least 10,000 women, while through the conventional training we are planning to make another 10,000 SHG members literate by the end of December 2007.

We have also taken care of the Social Security of the poor at minimum premium. Some of our CSOs have taken initiative in this direction and over 50,000 poor have been linked with rural insurance. We have also undertaken gender workshop training at the cluster level for all the CSOs.

After this elaborate presentation on PACS-Bihar, Mr. Rakesh Jha invited the chief guest Mr Baidyanath Mahto to the podium to share his experiences.

Mr. Mahto appreciated the work of PACS and said that the very objective of PACS would help in changing the future of Bihar. “In Bihar about 89% of the people reside in the villages. Unless we develop the villages we would not be able to develop Bihar” he said.

According to him in Panchayat Election the state had kept 50% reservation for women. Though more than 50% women candidates have won PRI elections there is an urgent of literacy among them.

In Bihar Leprosy is still seen as an untouchable disease due to lack of awareness, which is again a result of illiteracy. Many of them are thrown out of their own house. According to him PACS initiative on literacy would increase awareness and these incidents would get reduced. “We also expect the poorest get the Indira Awas through increase in awareness among the poor” he further added. Mr. Mahto appreciated the facilitating role of the CSOs in helping poor realize their rights & entitlements.



Mr. Baidyanath Mahto, Minister, RDD, Bihar, expressing his views

North Bihar reels under floods every year. The floods destroy crops and houses. Mr. Mahto said that the government is taking appropriate steps in providing land and houses to needy. According to him the financial institutions have very negative approach towards the SHGs. Looking at these problems the state government had kept a meeting with the bank officials where it made it clear that the banks should provide loan through the Pradhanmantri Rojgar Yojna and have pro-poor strategy otherwise the government would stop depositing development funds in their banks.

“The initiative of PACS to provide literacy to poor would be very helpful in strengthening Local Self Governance in Bihar”– Mr. Baidyanath Mahto, RDD Minister, Bihar

The central government took 23 districts under the NREGS but the state government added 15 more districts making Bihar the 1st state to have adopted all its districts. According to Mr. Mahto due to the lack of know-how and corruption the program is facing many problems. He further said that the state government has opened grievances cell to facilitate the process of NREGS at the local level. “In Bihar the earth

work, which is the base of NREGS, is tougher than other states, that is why we reduced the per day work to 80 cube feet from 110 and also raised the minimum wage from 68 rupees to 77 rupees” he added.

At the end of his speech Mr. Mahto again thanked PACS for its endeavors and appealed to all the CSOs to work together for removing poverty from Bihar.

NREGS

PACS- Bihar has been intensively facilitating the implementation of NREGS in Bihar. It had launched the NREGS awareness week in July 2006 and since then it has achieved several milestones in making this scheme functional at the grass roots. The CSOs at the grass root level have been making the villagers aware of this scheme and at the same time providing the PRI members vital information required to implement this scheme. At the state level, PACS is working in close coordination with the Rural Development Department-Bihar for its proper implementation across the state. PACS has also been taking out monitoring reports of all its 6 states, which helps the Bihar based administrative officials and policy makers to do a comparative analysis and see where Bihar stands *vis-à-vis* the other states of India.



Dr. A K Basu expressing his views during NREGS session

The session on NREGS started with short though extremely instructive speech of Dr. A.K Basu. According to him he has been attached with the NREGA concept before it became an Act. “We make a grave mistake by taking NREGA only as an anti-poverty programme, actually it provides security only for 100 days and the rest of the days the poor has to take risks to make his life better” he said.

“BDOs with PRI members should not make NREGS five-year village plan. This is the work of the Gram Sabha and they should plan it out”- Dr AK Basu, PACS-PSC chairman

According to him another significant point is that the work undertaken under NREGS should not be called unskilled labour. The whole scheme can be turned into a productive asset and the villagers can be inspired to be innovative. The act provides 60% unskilled labour and 40% skilled, however, this ratio does not work in case of digging a well. “A more significant aspect is

that we are making the five-year village plan in the NREGS through meetings with the BDO and few PRI members, which is wrong. This is the work of the Gram Sabha and they should plan it out” he added.

Mr. Basu ended his speech by saying that to implement the project successfully, training of the grass root staff and other PRI and government functionaries is required. A team should be established with the help of Gram Sabha for the social Audit.

After this concise speech of Mr. Basu, PACS-CSO Fakirana Sisters Society (FSS) made its presentation on the status of NREGS in West Champaran

West Champaran

District Status

- Total Job Cards distributed–1,91,860 Jobs Generated- 1,88,192 Human day, Total Expenditure – Rs 216.94. crores Out of 862, 153 Yojana has been completed
- Awareness is still lacking among the people and also among the PRI and government officials. No priorities as per the norms are being given and no plans are prepared under SREGA for instance in Banoochapar Gram Panchayat suitable work is not taken up
- At many places work has started but has not been completed. Wages are not distributed properly – payment not done in time.
- Mukhyias are not taking interest, as norms are not in favour of their benefits. Payment should be done through Bank Account for wage worker
- “KAAM NAHI KHULA HAI” is the general excuse given by by Mukhiya / Panchayat Sewak & Block Officials The work under this Yojna is being done on “Contract” basis. Job cards are being issued without application and work is given without registration / application.
- Muster Rolls are not made public to hide the realities. No transparencies in these processes.



Cluster presentations on NREGS

FSS Efforts & Impacts:

- Mobilized community groups / women / Dalits around SREGY provisions, norms, etc such as application, registration, Job Card, work under SREGY, etc. Took out Rojgar Adhikar Yatra in Nov 2006
- Organized dharna at Block Office – 21st Feb & 9th March 2007 and is contributing in the National Level Study for assessing the progress on NREGA. FSS mobilized SHGs to act as pressure groups for the implementation of this scheme.
- FSS has initiated the new exercise for ensuring effective implementation by facilitating application, submission and receipt of application from concerned representatives and build pressure for availability of work under SREGY
- It is building Pressure Groups at ward level

Challenges & Ways Ahead

- Still there is dependency on Block Officials for Yojna Preparation & its approval. Earth filling is still the most common work under SREGY
- Promote SHG member for preparation of schemes for SREGY and get approval through Gram Sabha Meeting. Implementation should be preferred through SHGs as the unit.
- Pressure building through Ward Committee at the village level and maintaining partnership with Rural Development Department at the state level.

Nawada

PACS-CSO MVS presented its findings on the basis of its survey in 20 villages of 4 gram Panchayats in Rajuli Block of Nawada district covering 880 households.

Survey Highlights:

- 316 proper job cards were distributed
- From December 06 onwards worksites were opened and earth work was taken up
- Applications for unemployment allowance were made but no action taken
- About 75% Job card-holder could not get work and those who got work were provided for average 15 days (30 days was the maximum). There was high level of irregularity in wage distribution
- Drinking water was available in all the sites however, there was no provision for shade, crèche or first aid
- Work demand is not matching the work generation (micro-plan) There is serious lack of information at all the levels

After listening to the CSO's experiences, Mr. Anup Mukerji took his turn to elaborate the government's experiences in implementing NREGS. He said that today we are running many schemes but the pace of implementation is quite slow. The main reason is we lack in proper implementation structure and the attitude & orientation required for it. According to him the administration lacks field staffs and block officials. In almost 1/3rd of the panchayats there are no panchayat secretaries. "In NREGS there are lot of paper work and we lack the skills and knowledge of them", he said.

Added to these there is a lack of awareness among the poor

"We are planning to train the PRI members and grass-root officials on NREGS after which we expect its implementation would be further smoothed"- Mr. Anup Mukerji, RDD Commissioner & Secretary, Bihar

implementation would be smoothed.

By the end of June 07 all these posts would be filled. Mr. Mukerji said that RDD is also planning for training the grass-root officials and PRI members, in which PACS is playing an important role. He further added that the training would not be paper work rather would be based on grass-root experiences.



Mr. Anup Mukerji expressing his views in the workshop

and there are coercive elements in the villages, who abate the development process. According to Mr. Mukerji in this scheme we should have one Rojgar sevak in every panchayat, at least one technical assistant for 10 panchayats, one computer operator and a block program coordinator and we are conducting exams for their recruitment and very soon, the

“We are giving the Indira Awas to those who really need it and for that we are revising the BPL list. In order to remove corruption we are trying to remove the links between the local politicians and the government servants. Now we are making cheques of Indira Awas for groups of beneficiaries (not for individuals) and the banks would in turn give it to the beneficiaries’ He said.

According to him the state government is providing computers for NREGS operations at the blocks. “In other states priorities are being given to the water resource development through this scheme but in Bihar almost 80-90% of the schemes are based on rural road. We are putting pressure to the local administration to take up water related schemes”, he said.

In the end Mr. Mukerji said that in Bihar there is a bad impression of cooperatives and NGOs and therefore it would be very good if we can develop some mechanism to monitor these NGOs. In the end he appreciated the initiatives of the CSOs and thanked PACS for trying to bring out the good NGOs through its platform.

Question & Answers

Following is the gist of the question-answer session with Mr. Mukerji during the 8th PLW

Q. How is the RDD sensitizing its administrative officials?

A. We have recruited fresh DDCs of the age group 51-55 years and conducted intensive orientation programme under which they were intensively trained and taken to the rural areas for their field visits. Two of the teams went with PACS team members to visit the PACS areas.

Q. We face a lot of problem in getting “No Objection” for renovating ponds. There are cases of corrupt practices in allotment of Indira Awas.

A. Animal Husbandry department and the RDD have jointly issued instructions to the DDCs that the ponds should be renovated. If it is not happening you should approach the DDCs on this issue. May be there are few cases of corruption in Indira Awas but they have been considerably reduced.

Q. Though we have the tool of RTI through which we can get the information on how much fund is coming at the block level on NREGS, but it takes a lot of time, does RDD have any alternative mechanism for us to know the details?

A. We do not have that manpower and facility to provide data to every individual CSOs. You can come via the PACS network and we can act faster.

Q. In NREGS the block officials feel that they will have to pay the unemployment allowance, how do you react to that?

A. The responsibility fixation of the person for not providing the work would be done, however, the government has ordered that at every place two schemes would run so that all those coming for work do not remain unemployed.

Q. We frequently come across cases in which the husband had defaulted and the bankers are not paying loans to their wives.

A. This is a genuine problem. We have given orders to the BDOs and the banks have also issued instructions to pay loans to wives in case the husbands have defaulted. Training and orientation is required to the bank managers in this regard.

Q. How do you ensure choosing good NGOs? In East Champaran we have the information that corrupt NGOs have been chosen for implementing government programmes?

A. I am looking for that answer myself.

Right To Information

Right to Information (RTI) is one of the most powerful tools provided to the citizens of India. It can be used to get the information from any of the government run or funded agencies. RTI bill was passed in Lok Sabha on 11 May 2005 and it became fully operational from 12th October 2005. Initially Bihar was quite slow in implementing this Act however, by January 2006 it appointed the PIOs and also opened an RTI call center. But, using RTI is still a challenge in the rural areas of Bihar. The Act requires filling of the forms, which becomes difficult for the illiterate; moreover, the poor are scared to directly confront the PIOs who they think might penalize them for asking information. Though the call center opened at the state level nullifies these apprehensions but it is not operating smoothly either. Added to these problems, the government officers are also unaware of the provision of this Act, which further impedes its implementation.



Mr. SK Mishra, Secretary of State Information Commission with Mrs Kiran Sharma and Mr. Rakesh Jha during the RTI session

PACS has been working on RTI since it was launched. PACS CSOs especially from Madhubani cluster have been able to deliver tangible results. Mr. Ashok Kumar Singh presented the achievements and challenges PACS-CSO face in implementing this Act in Madhubni region.

RTI Bill passed in Lok Sabha: 11 May 2005

Became fully operational: 12th October 2005

According to him the CSOs in Madhubani got information on RTI Act in the 6th PACS PLW held in March 2006. Just After going back from this PLW, a PACS partner CSO helped a person called “Majloom” to file Bihar's first RTI application. PACS CSOs joined training camp in May 2006 at New Delhi on the drive against bribe campaign.

Gradually the RTI drive in Madhubani took the shape of a movement called “Bihar Rajya Suchana Adikar Prahari”. PACS CSOs with other Delhi based NGOs submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister of Bihar on 8th Nov 2006 for opening a call center and it was opened on 29th January 2007. The call center is still not functional in remote areas. “The Govt. officials lack proper information on RTI and behave arrogantly with applicants and try to scare them” he added.

Some of the recent initiatives taken on RTI by PACS-CSOs of that area are:

- Dharna at sub divisional and district level.

- Orientation programme organized with the administration of Jhanjharpur subdivision,
- Panchyat and block level camps.
- One help-line center established in the civil court campus, Jhanjharpur, for RTI applicant
- Panchayat Prahare regularly creating awareness among the rural poor and helping them file applications under RTI for entitlement.

Cases solved through RTI

- RTI application was filed through the Sochna prahare on the job card distribution in three Panchyats; Behat North, Gangapur, & Madanpur at Lakhnour Block in Madhubani District. Before the reply could come more than 400 job card got distributed.
- Mazloom was helped in filing RTI on his status of getting Indira Awas in April 2006, and within 20 days the Indira Awas was awarded to him. Subsequently 10 more cases for Indra Awas has been filed and 50% result has been achieved. Three handicapped families were also granted Indira Awas.



RTI session in progress

Thereafter, GPSVS presented the report of its Social Audit, which is a process whereby the organizations voluntarily disclose each and every fact of their organization to the public. PACS-CSO GPSVS tried this approach in Madhubani Town hall with participants including DDC, Chairman ZP, BDO, Govt officials, CSOs, Media persons, PRI members and villagers.

According to the representative of the GPSVS the objectives of the Social Audit were:

- Transparency
- Sensitize govt. / PRI / others about social audit
- Accountability towards stakeholders
- As Initiatives / examples
- Develop sense of ownership among community

The issues highlighted during the Social audit were:

- Programme for which the audit was done: “Survival with recurring flood” under PACS
- Disclosure was made on work, process & finances
- All documents related to programme was made available to the participants
- Ideas and views were shared by the participants

The implications of this event was:

- It sensitized administration and others to a large extent. The DDC of Madhubani encouraged the CSOs by saying that he is surprised and pleased by seeing that somebody has come forward to take this initiative voluntarily.
- The CSOs could know our strength and limitation better
- Credibility of the organization goes up in the eye of stakeholders
- It would encourage community to go for social audit for the government schemes

After this experience rich presentation on Social Audit, Mr. SK Mishra, Secretary, State Information Commission spoke on the act and its implementation procedures. He said that all the government offices come under the purview of the RTI, be it block level administration, district or state, education department to colleges and also the NGOs funded by the government.

He emphasized on the section – 4 of the Act that compels the government offices to voluntarily disclose some vital information about itself so that there is no need for the people to ask for those information.

“All the PIOs have been identified and they have been asked to put nameplates so that common man can know their role. However, few problems still remain in implementing this Act” - Mr. S. K Mishra, Secretary, State RTI Commission, Bihar

According to him all the PIOs have been identified and they have been asked to put nameplates so that common man can know their role. According to him a plethora of problems still remain in implementing this Act. One of them is the payment of fees; others are like lack of awareness among the people. For this he appealed to the NGOs to set up awareness camps. He also said that networks like

these (PACS) would definitely boost the awareness level of the grass root people who need the information the most. There are cases where the PIO misbehaves or does not cooperate. In those cases, the commission expects that these complains should come from the NGOs. The commission would fine the erring officials ranging from rupees 250 - Rs 25,000.

Along with the NGOs he also appealed to the media to help the state implement this scheme. According to him the commission became active in December 06 and around 600 cases have come to them out of which they have been able to solve 292 cases.

Following is the gist of question & answer session with Mr. SK Mishra, Secretary of State Information Commission

Q. Does the commission have the provision of providing training to the administrative officials?

A. No, we do not have the provision of providing training to the officers but pressure can be built on the government for the same

Q. Is the commission monitoring the process of RTI in the districts?

A. We have monitored the District Magistrates, Superintendent of Police and other administrative officials in 4 districts; Patna, Ara, Samstipur, and Muzaffarpur. Jamui district would be taken up soon

Q. How far the call center is successful as many applicants do not get the receiving of the application thus they do not have any proof for filing applications?

A. We have tied up with BSNL for it and it operating well in Patna; mechanism is being developed to connect the rest of other districts shortly for smooth connectivity.

Literacy

Bihar is taking tangible steps to increase women participation in the development process; however, it still lags behind in women literacy compared to other states. The national percentage of literate women is 54.16% while that of Bihar is 33.57% (2001 census). Looking at the importance of literacy in any development process and the lack of it in Bihar, Development Alternatives with PACS launched CBT (Computer Based Training) program to provide literacy to PACS SHGs. It is estimated that over 10,000 SHG members would be made literate through this computer-based programme. PACS is also undertaking the conventional literacy method for another 10,000 SHG members. By December 07 end; it hopes to make at least 25000 members literate through these interventions. PACS also plans to collaborate with other government & non-government agencies and programmes like SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) to increase the overall literacy level of the rural Bihar.



CSO representatives during the literacy session

During the PLW, representative of Tara Haat (sister wing of Development Alternatives, which is coordinating the literacy programme) presented its literacy plan.

- Tara Haat through the program called Tara Akshar is running 230 centers in 7 states of India
- It is connected with both national and international agencies; like Self-foundations, Usha International, ICICI bank, Indian Space Research Organization, Microsoft, Phillips, Indian Space, etc.
- Indian Space Research Organization is a project under which Tara Haat establishes village resource organizations so that the problems the villagers can be solved through easy communications. All the organizations that are connected with this project are linked to expert centers and Hospitals. In case the local doctor unable to solve a problem he/she can consult more experienced doctors through this connectivity.
- Through tele-education, which is for adults, Tara Akshar is planning to give information of weather, crop production, etc.

National percentage of literate women: 54.16%
 Bihar percentage of literate women: 33.57%
 (2001 census)
 Target of PACS (Bihar) through CBT & conventional literacy: 25000 SHG members

- Tara Akshar would like to use the infrastructure and human resource of those organizations that are interested in getting networked with this project. It needs organizations that can use their skills & resources to help the poorest in the most interior areas.
- DA, Tarahat or ISRO is not providing any financial Aid for this project. We think the local organizations are capable enough to invest initially and later this venture can bring them returns.

Mrs Kiran Sharma added that the CSOs should think positive about this venture and join this drive, as information technology is the base of any development process.

Thereafter, Mr. Rajeev Kumar from Education and Social Welfare Trust of India (ESTWI) presented the strategy for educating the SHG members through the conventional method.

According to him:

- Education and Social Welfare Trust is working in 18 districts of Bihar and Jharkhand, under the name of Shiksha Vikas Pariyojna.
- It is a low budget programme and focuses on building self-confidence and self-respect of the students and parents so that cheating in the examinations are reduced.
- The project started in 2005. In all the districts we have district and block coordinators & resource teachers who guide the students on their models.
- For the PACS SHGs ESTWI would adopt a new strategy based on the problems women face in their area.
- The trust would adopt a functional unit of 27 SHG members begin with awareness among them through psychoanalytical method.
- The SHG members should be taught to recognize letters & words from their day – to - day life, and be able to know the government schemes. To monitor the process the district and block coordinators should guide them so that a proper channel is developed.

Mr Ravi Shankar representative of Bihar Shiksha Pariyojana Parishad (BSPP) explained in detail the objectives, work status and the possibilities of convergence of it with the PACS-CSOs.

- Bihar Shiksha Pariyojana Parishad (BSPP) is an autonomous body registered under the society registration Act, 1860, engaged and committed to an innovative social reform programme through reconstruction of educational system in the state of Bihar. Its major aims include the universalization of primary/elementa education with quality and focus on depressed class and women since 1991.
- With the UNICEF & Government of India, the state launched an ambitious programme of Education for all in 1991.
- The Parishad is implementing following



Mr Ravi Shankar representative of Bihar Shiksha Pariyojana Parishad (BSPP) during the literacy session

programmes to educate the rural and semi-urban masses, especially girls, disabled and children of deprived and downtrodden section of the society.

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA),
- National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL), and
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV).
- Vidyalaya Chalo Kendra for 6-8 age group out of school children.
- Prayas Kendra for 8-11 age group out of school children.
- Utkarsh Kendra for 11-14 age group children with an input of vocational education.
- Angna schools for 11-14 age group out of school girls.
- Residential bridge course camps with various durations for difficult group of children.
- Interventions for the children enrolled in Dini Maktabas and Madarsas.
- Special interventions for the urban children, street children, child labours and migratory children
- Summer camp/Winter camp like time bound campaign with accelerated learning inputs. Remedial Teaching for mainstreamed children.

Girl's education

- Education of Girls, especially those belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minority is one of the principal concerns in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Keeping this in view, the Government of India has approved a special programme named National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) for girls' education.
- The Government of India launched a scheme called Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) with the objective to ensure access and quality education to the girls of most disadvantaged group by setting up residential schools for 50 adolescent girls with boarding facilities at elementary level.
- The KGBV scheme is to be implemented in coordination with other existing schemes, and in Bihar, Bihar Education Project Council is implementing it through the Mahila Samakhya (MS) Society in the districts where MS exists, and for other districts it is collaborating with local NGOs/VSS.
- Sensitization of teachers and educational functionaries have been made part of all the training modules and specifically taken care of while imparting training. Suitable strategies have been formulated for opening centers catering needs of children of these groups.
- In order to retain children in schooling system, free textbooks, Mid-day meal, Incentive allowances & joyful learning are being provided.
- Convergence has been made with Madarsas & Maqtabas. TLM, Textbooks, Teachers & Training. The School Development Grant is being provided to recognize Madarsa/ Maqtab under SSA.

“Education of scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and minority girls is the principal concern of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan”- Mr. Ravi Shankar, Bihar Shiksha Pariyojana Parishad

Text Books

- Under SSA free textbooks provided to all focus group (SC,ST & all Girls) children. Requisition for textbooks are obtained from district. Printing order awarded to parties on the basis of National Competitive Bidding (NCB). Text Books Corporation supplies books to district headquarters, from where it goes to BRC, CRC & Schools for distribution.
- For the academic year 2006, against the requisition of 3.5 crores textbooks, BSTBPC has already supplied about 3.3 crores to districts. UNICEF monitors distribution of textbooks
- For the academic year 2007, requisition of 3.58 crores textbooks, has already been given to BSTBPC.

Convergence-Area

- Mid-day meal scheme, Border-area development scheme, School Sanitation and Health Education under PHED, Child Labour Elimination Programme, PMGY & Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Sam Vikas Yojana, Rehabilitation of schools, boundary wall, Sports facilities etc. from GOB

Questions & Answer Session with SSA representative:

Q. How are you maintaining the quality of education?

A. In the beginning we did not focus on the quality education however, we are now focusing on it and it is on our top priority this year. The students of Bihar have a lot of talent and we are taking care of how we can further improve their quality. We are also looking for NGO's support in our ventures.

Q. Sanctioning of the projects under SSA gets immensely delayed. Why?

A. That is why we are here and we would appreciate if the whole process is smoothened from the (PACS) network efforts

Q. You are increasing the teacher's pay from 1500-4000 rupees, how would you garner the resources?

A. It is an important question and a very challenging one. We are trying to do it from various sources; it will take some more time.

SHGs – Livelihood & Micro-finance

The session on Self Help Groups - livelihood & micro finance started with the presentation of PACS-CSO NBSKPK. PACS has been able to form around 4500 SHGs with over 62 thousand members and the total savings crosses one crore rupees. The representative of NBSKPK focused on one of the projects called “Women empowerment for poorest women of civil society through self-help group formation, policy

Area: Giriyak & Silao Block of Nalanda district, Bihar

Number of SHGs: 103 SHGs

79 SHGs had their saving account with Bank

Vocational training was imparted to SHG members on food processing, agarbatti making and sewing. However despite credit linkage the trainings could not be converted into IGA for SHG members. After evaluation it was found that the Mahila Adhikar Morcha – Apex body of SHGs was non functional, the bank linkage was slow. The requirements of the members were small. Overall the IGP approach was not working and the actual livelihood analysis was missing



Session on livelihood and micro finance in progress

Looking at this situation few significant steps were taken. Analysis was made on the SHGs savings & utilization (analysis regarding the daily/ weekly/ monthly expenditure). Complete database was maintained and the SHGs were sensitized.

The banks were sensitized on actual credit demand of the members and the repayment capacity of the SHGs. The changes are quite perceptible in some of the CSOs. The interest earned over inter-loaning is rupees 31,581 which is 166% rise to the previous figure of rupees 11,855. The groups are earning rupees 6,658.54 as interest on the inter-loaning amount. Priorities for taking credit are now being set by the groups. Group members are taking loan ranging from rupees 10 to rupees 1000. Some of the other achievements of this project are, partnership with NABARD, RBI team visited the area and recognized the initiative.

In the overall initiative it was seen that livelihood can be promoted on individual basis and more importantly credit – has different meaning for poor.

After the presentation of NBKSKPK the representative of PACS-CSO Samanway Tirth from Gaya cluster presented the ground realities of self help groups and micro-finance.

Following is the gist of the presentation:

- Area: Dumaria block of Gaya District of Magadh Zone of Bihar
- Poor law & order situation, Human Development Index and other records depicts negative growth rate, livelihood- one of the major concerns. It is a drought prone

- region and forced migration is rampant. Livelihood sources are depleting fast and the number of the wage labourer & landlessness is on the rise
- Samanway Tirth formed 87 SHGs that has 1008 members with the total saving of 1,41,412, revolving fund received was Rs 60,000 (58,000 distributed among 5 SHGs) and internal loaning amount is rupees 3,15,188. About 910 members are involved in inter loaning
 - SHGs intervention was instrumental in addressing Health and Education with focus on children, women and adolescents of Dalit community (Bhuiya). The enrollment rate has increased by 40 %.
 - 33 SHGs women members got elected in the PRI
 - Now the SHG members put forth their problems in Janta Darbar & NABARD. 52 of them are linked with the banks
 - Few of the success stories are; SHG members took a disputed pond on lease and started fishery, some SHG members were instrumental in abolishing the role of middlemen in stone cutting industry in that area and the SHGs members of Salaia Gram Panchayat are preparing the Micro Plan for NREGA

After Samanway Tirth from Gaya district, representative of Kanchan Sewa Ashram shared the experiences SHGs livelihood & micro finance in Muzaffarpur district. According to him:

- Micro-Finance is a set of financial services, which mostly includes savings and credit, and often encompasses other services like insurance, directed to ultimately benefit the disadvantaged section of the population / economically poor groups – KSA called them Clients
- KSA has effectively organized the poor. The strength of SHGs calls for building economic and political awareness among disadvantaged and economically poor clients. The disadvantaged had no access to formal financial systems
- KSA has been able to form 18 Joint Liability Groups with 90 members, Out of 590 SHGs – 252 SHGs has been formed under PACS programme with total members of 3567. The repayment rate is 100%. 51 individual have been insured under various insurance schemes
- Kanchan Sewa Ashram is trying to reduce the role of local money lenders, developing risk management Strategy related to business promotion for disadvantaged, and is also promoting profit analysis and sharing it with the clients

After the presentation of Kanchan Seva Ashram the representative of Madhya Pradesh Rural Livelihood Programme elaborated on the situation of livelihood in MP's rural areas and the related intervention of MPRLP. According to him MPRLP is running its project with the help of the MP government and DFID. Its goal is sustainable enhancement of livelihood of the poor in the selected districts. The main purpose of it is to link the poor with the government sponsored schemes. During the 1st Phase, which is also called the learning phase, the women did not attend the Gram Sabha but now they have started attending and also demanding their rights and entitlements.



CSO representatives presenting their initiatives during the PLW

They have started demanding for grains from PDS. The Indira Awas beneficiaries are selected from the Gram Sabha. All this happened as a result of the training provided to them on Gram Sabha; MPRLP told them about their rights and about the importance of it and provided all the help needed by them and asked them to look for livelihood options for themselves.

After this brief speech, the Manager of Micro Finance ICICI bank briefed upon the state of micro finance in rural Bihar and the related ICICI interventions. According to him Bihar faces the first challenge of its less Credit Deposit Ratio, which is 32-33%. This means that only 32 % of the total deposit is being used in Bihar. Due to political turmoil ICICI was not investing in Bihar however, Bihar is top of its chart since 2007. Bihar should try to bring the CD ratio above 50%. From this fiscal ICICI is trying to network 10-15 partners and build a portfolio of 100-150 crore. The NGOs can be their best partners as they have a grip over these areas. Terms and modalities can be discussed. Through suitable micro financing we can stop the out-migration and also increase the productivity of Bihar, which can thus be helpful in developing the state. Mr. Mukesh Sharan, state manager of BRLP said that one of the basic objective of BRLP is to work with the Self Help promoting Institutes, the more groups are formed the better it is and the bankers would be in a better position to deal with them. According to him there are few federations in Bihar, we should try to make many more. BRLP is trying to computerize the SGH and micro-financing system at all levels. BRLP is working on the market-oriented economy and is currently identifying the markets.

Question & Answer Session

Q. How much functional is the Gram Sabha in Madhya Pradesh? Is there any structure of funding the Gram Sabha and how is the account managed in the Gram Sabha?

A. (MPRLP representative) All the projects have a bank account and the money is put into the account. In the Gram Sabha people have started providing free labour, ICDS centers have been opened, social taboos have been removed, monitoring is done for the proper utilization of the funds, the peer pressure groups provide the monitoring support and it is extremely efficient. 13-19% contribution has been made to Gram Sabha, and that money remains in a separate account of Gram Kosh and this money can be used even after the project is over.

Q. We tried to link with the ICICI bank but they ask for 15% security deposit. Our organizations are not that strong to provide that much amount. What do you think is the solution?

A. (ICICI representative) 15% is the policy level decision and the institution takes it for security purposes The NGO will have to create the market and face the challenges.

Q. The rate of interest of ICICI bank is more compared to other commercial banks. Why?

A. (ICICI representative) The other commercial banks are also increasing their rate of interest. The advantage with ICICI is that one can take as much loan as he wants.

After the question answer session Mr. Ashok Kumar Sinha from Karma Consultants related the MDGs with the achievements of PACS. According to him:

- There have been incidences of decreased dependence on moneylenders, increase of income and diversification of income resources, reduction in incidences of poverty,

improvement in nutrition including diversification of food items. For example in Prabhkar Mahila Samiti, out of 14 members, 12 have started IGP, their total saving is rupees 23,100, and internal loaning is rupees 77,350. In Tiranga Mahila Samiti, out of 10 members, 6 have started IGP. 800 Families have acquired Patta of 32 Acres of land

- Girls and Boys of SHG members started attending school - Nagama & Kalpana SHG member ensured education of girls & boys, Proportion of pupils who reach grade 5 in primary education is higher in families of SHG members. There is an increase in the number of politically active marginalized women – over 2250 PRI members won with support of PACS
- We are reaching to nearly 25000 women for their literacy. There is an increase in the use of curative health measures by SHG households and increase use of preventive health measures (hygiene, education, immunization, building AIDS awareness, etc.) by SHG households
- There is an increase in the demand for more financial services / loan from SHGs (e.g. health insurance) amongst members of SHGs. The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel has increased.



Presentation by PACS RO
Karma Consultant during the
PLW

It may be recalled the Millennium Summit was held at the United Nations (New York) in September 2000, 189 countries reaffirmed their commitment for working towards a world in which sustaining development and eliminating poverty would have the highest priority. Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by a consensus of experts to measure progress in all the major areas related to the well being of people. All goals are interlinked, and efforts to achieve one goal will have positive spillover effects on several others. The eight millennium-goals are: MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education, MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women, MDG 4: Reduce child mortality, MDG 5: Improve maternal health, MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability & MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Special Sessions

Land Rights

Landlessness poses one of the major challenges in the development of Bihar. Land reforms have never been properly implemented in the state. As a result even today it is estimated that 25 lakhs poor are landless. One of the priority sectors of PACS is to facilitate the landless get the land. PACS CSOs that are working on this issue have come up with significant outcomes.

For instance, Deshkaal Society, one of the PACS CSOs, is fighting for the land rights of the poor. It had done a survey on landlessness. The Survey was carried out in 4 blocks of Gaya District, which includes 24 Panchayats and 361 villages. The total number of respondents was 19081 and it covered all marginal communities especially the Musahar community.

Following are few significant findings of the Survey:

- Majority of the Musahar community are dwelling in their homesteads since more than 10 years. Almost 46% of Musahars are yet to receive legal documents of Patta/Parwana of their homesteads.
- A major portion of land nearly 54.76% is Rayati Land under the patronage of Maliks as well as general public common property land
- Legal impediments emerges as one of the major reasons for not having either Parcha or Parwana, 38% of surveyed household do not have any knowledge of Bihar Privileged Persons Homestead Tenancy Act.
- Legal procedures are too complex and time consuming. Other impediments are like mistrust between Panchayat Bodies, local administration & community and lack of availability of minimum level of infrastructure
- There is a necessity to adopt an Integrated Approach. Also the Circle Officers have to play a crucial and responsible role. Added to that there is an urgent need of survey & widespread sensitization drive

After this presentation, Ekta Parishad – PACS CSO in Bihar, that is leading the Land Right movement in other states as well elaborated on the challenges & the strategy they have dopted:

According to the representative of Ekta Parishad around thirty lakh families are landless and homeless, the government claims to have given land pattas, but the land is not in possession of the poor. 49% distributed Bhoodan land are not mutated by the government and 21% bhoodan farmers have occupied land, but not mutated by the govt. 85% landless live on Gairmajarua land since last 50 to 100 years. About 90% Musahar families are landless and homeless.

Ekta Parishad has intervened directly in 825 villages in 13 districts of Bihar that covers 155 panchayats. Around two lakh fifty thousand Dalits are directly linked with the land rights campaign. According to the Ekta Parishad representative 23 thousand applications for



Presentations on land rights

homestead land has been submitted to the circle office in 13 districts. A dialogue is continuing with Government.

Through the PACS intervention the local administration have started verification of the submitted homestead applications in ten blocks of nine districts. 27 families have got land pattas after struggle in Sicandara block of Jamui district. Around 400 families have occupied Bhoodan land in fatehpur block of Gaya district, which has bhoodan pattas and village committees have been constituted in 115 villages.

Food Security

Food security is an indicator of state's ability to assure survival of the poorest in the society. In Bihar a number of hunger deaths occur but they generally get reported as death due to some disease. Food security is one of its core issues of PACS for advocacy with the state and national government.

Representatives of PACS resource organizations elaborated upon the issues related to food security of the poor.

Reasons leading to the stage of extreme poverty:

- Lack of access over natural resources – land, water, forests and its produce, mineral, seeds – source of livelihood
- Unfair trade rules, increasing cost of agriculture for the small and marginal farmers – displacing artisans from traditional livelihoods



Participants during the Food Security session

Schemes providing food security: TPDS & Anntodaya Anna Yojna, NREGA, ICDS, MDM, National Maternity Benefit Scheme (Bal Jannai Suraksha Yojna), Annapura & National Family Benefit Scheme

The state is obliged to identify community groups that do not enjoy adequate food and livelihood security. The Supreme Court has by order dated May 8, 2002 appointed Commissioner to the Supreme Court and also State Advisor to Commissioner of the Supreme Court for taking assistance. There is a provision for appointment of Nodal Officer who will

facilitate State Advisor to commissioner of the Supreme Court for assistance. In case of non-appointment of Nodal Officer, the contact person would be Chief Secretary of the state.

Schemes providing food security are TPDS & Anntodaya Anna Yojna, NREGA, ICDS, MDM, National Maternity Benefit Scheme (Bal Jannai Suraksha Yojna), Annapura & National Family Benefit Scheme. The state government is held accountable for non accessibility of food security schemes through diversified mechanism such as public hearings, social audit, violation reporting and budget tracking

Role of state advisor to Commissioner of the Supreme Court:

- To send the commissioner regular updates about the situation in the state
- To convey to the commissioner any appeal for intervention that may be made in the state
- To work towards a more effective monitoring and redressal system within the state
- An analysis of performance of relevant schemes using macro data,

- Response to emergencies, like flood, drought, starvation deaths
- Gathering information from the state government on the performance of the relevant schemes and programme
- Articulating alternative demands regarding state policy especially on hunger
- Preparing periodic state reports
- Working towards accountability norms for public programmes related to food and food security
- Arranging visits of the commissioners if necessary

PACS CSOs provide contribution by:

- Violation reporting for effective implementation of Food Entitlements schemes .
- Advocating for introducing a National Food Guarantee Act on 15th August 2007
- Promote the establishment of Community Food and Water Banks
- Help small and marginal farmers to improve the productivity and quality of farm enterprises
- Introduce support system to SHGs – Micro Finance to Livelihood Finance

PACS in order to update the Supreme Court on food security situations is launching a survey in the selected districts:

Coverage: 2 districts in each of the PACS six states (10 villages each districts)

Target Schemes: Public Distribution system & Antoday Yojna, NREGS, ICDS, National Maternity Benefit Scheme, National Family Benefit Scheme, Mid-day Meal Programme, Old Age Pension Scheme & Annapurna Yojna

In Nawada district of Bihar PACS CSOs Gram Nirman Mandal & Mahila Vikas Samiti are conducting this survey while Mandan Bharti Jagriti Samaj is conducting the survey in Saharsa district of Bihar.

Communication Initiatives

Mr. Ajit Sahi who is coordinating the PACS communications at the national level and who is also the South Asia coordinator of UN Millennium Development Goal Campaign said that PACS has done commendable job for uplifting the life of the poorest in 6 states of India. Now PACS should strategize communication in such a manner that the voice of the poor are heard and seen across the nation. He emphasized on the power of media and said how PACS can effectively use it.

PACS is trying to highlight the poorest community women who despite extreme adverse circumstances have been able to make an impression on the society. It would highlight how the Dalit women who have won the PRI elections are changing the face of their village. PACS would also show how the landless have fought for their rights and undertake exchange programs of village based schools and rich public schools.

PACS intends to organize a series of events at the national level like Nidar Sammelan, Garib Ka sargam, Opinion poll from the poorest of the poor, etc. We would tie up with BBC, CNN, NDTV, Aaj Tak, Times of India and other media houses and channels. By the year-end it would organize a national level convention in which the Prime Minister of India would be invited and he would interact with the poorest of the poor.

PACS-Ways Ahead

One of the crucial challenges of any anti-poverty programme is its sustainability. During the 8th PLW one session was devoted to discuss on how PACS network & its ongoing efforts can be made sustainable. During this session the Management Consultants, the Resource & Communication organizations and the Civil Society Organizations mulled over how to carry forward the large, multi-pronged initiatives that have been facilitated through the PACS network. The session was in the form of open house and every one got an opportunity to speak out his/her ideas.

The crux that came out from this open house were:

One of the important initiatives of PACS has been linking the poor with the government schemes and entitlements. All the CSOs are inclined towards this mode of functioning whereby they do advocacy and help government agencies to facilitate the government programs function properly and reach the beneficiaries. Since PACS is a huge network this collective effort of government and PACS should be properly taken up at the State and National level. At the state level PACS is being linked to the RTI, to NREGS, to PRI, but we should also try to project PACS as a force at the national level as well.



CSO representatives during the discussion on PACS sustainability

PACS essential tool for development are the SHGs. SHGs are not only helpful for saving and enhancing the financial security but also for strengthening local self-governance and spread awareness among other villagers. However, forming SHGs was not very easy in remote areas. With the help of resource organizations, the CSOs have been able form & strengthened the SHGs and they are being linked with NABARD and DRDA, but how could we (CSOs) do the collective linkage? One of the suggestions that came up during this session was that we could bring all the 40 thousand women members to the state capital and talk of their future strategy with the state policy makers and officials. Another idea was to give fillip to the formation of federations. The challenge is how to link them at the state and national level.

“Since the CSOs are capacitated and exposed enough they can carry forward several of PACS initiatives by themselves” –R C Chawdhury, GNM (PACS CSO)

The SHGs are not properly linked to the market. PACS network should explore the markets and link it to the SHG productive units from all the areas.

PACS investment for the poor in development has been extremely productive in Bihar, as it had been at other places. It has strengthened the community to fight for their rights and entitlements. In Champaran for instance PACS had spent 60 lakhs on empowering the Mushahars and these Mushahars have been able to garner resources worth 60 crores from the government. These good practices should be popularized across the nation and replicated.



CSO representative expressing his concern during this session

Literacy is one of the important tools for development. A very ambitious project has been launched called the Computer Based Literacy programme by PACS. We should try to link the rest of the SHGs with the conventional literacy programme and make this initiative replicable by the government.

PACS has been successful in one of its prime objectives of capacity building of the CSOs - its chief functionary and staffs. The capacity building ranges from the professional inputs in development work to awareness on the government schemes and liaison with them. This has apparently helped in making the whole programme sustainable by itself.

PACS-CSOs are running several programs besides PACS. Gram Nirman Mandal gave the example how it has managed to link 238 SHGs to the Khadi Gram Udyog and how it is planning for their finance, products and the markets. Since the CSOs are capacitated and exposed enough they can by themselves carry forward several of its initiatives by linking them with other government and the non-government programs. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh has also approached the SHGs for financing the SHGs.

PACS Clusters - an Over-View

PACS-Bihar is divided into four clusters for convenience in implementing its programmes, they are; Madhubani (Mithila), Muzaffarpur (Tirhut), Nawada (Magadh-1) and Gaya (Magadh-2) Cluster. These clusters are the club of the poorest districts of Bihar that are perpetually marred by natural calamities like floods & droughts and the neglect of confused & callous administration. One can imagine the condition of the interior rural areas by the sheer fact that most of the block headquarters in Bihar remain in darkness for months due to the lack of electricity. Following is the detail of this cluster-experience sharing session:

Gaya Cluster

- PACS has helped over 219 marginalized women candidates win PRI elections in this cluster
- It has helped in creating livelihood options, helped in coping with the drought situations, and is facilitating in providing land pattas to the landless
- It is tracking NREGS in this area and is doing advocacy with the local administration. It has helped the poor get entitlements and brought out the cases of hunger
- It has also undertaken Gender & Disability mainstreaming exercise and has advanced on network based expansion of Micro Credit & Insurance
- PACS network is trying to link the CSOs with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and with other funding agencies like UNICEF.
- It is trying to strengthen the community for using RTI by propagating it through the grass root staffs.

Muzaffarpur (Tirhut Cluster)

- PACS in this cluster has been focusing on strengthening SHGs, federation, Local Resource Organizations & cooperative movements. It is promoting livelihood, Micro Finance & Insurance
- The grass root CSOs are mobilizing the villagers and the government officials & PRI members, which has given boost to NREGS and the realization of entitlements.
- The drive of Tara & Functional Literacy has been undertaken to increase literacy among the SHG members
- A large social capital has been generated and PACS has facilitated in the bringing out round 5643 women leaders. 332 marginalized women won PRI elections with the help of PACS. Now it is playing a pivotal role in the orientation and training of these PRI members

- It has facilitated in forming over 50 community-based volunteers for disaster preparedness who are also part of rescue team countering the natural calamities, It is promoting viable agricultural practices in flood prone areas. It is also promoting the villagers to be part of Shiksha Mitras, Health Volunteers or members of VECs.
- It has strengthened the CSOs by orienting them on Self Monitoring exercises, proper computerized data-base & MIS. It has helped in Gender & disability mainstreaming and is trying to link the CSOs with SSA, BRLP & other developing agencies of the state.
- It is strengthening the community for using RTI as a tool for promoting transparency & accountably

Nawada (Magadh-1) Cluster

- PACS in this cluster is doing the credit mapping exercise at the group level, it is promoting credit intake within the SHGs and is doing advocacy with financial institutions for customization of credit products as per community's demand. It is mobilizing resources from other funding/developing agencies - NABARD& DRDA.
- It has provided credit linkages of more than 200 SHGs. Banks are breaking their own conventional trend. SHGs are increasingly being mobilized to act as pressure groups for Gram Sabha and promoting other developmental activities in the villages. It helped in promoting 548 successful PRI candidates.
- It is facilitating in the realization of entitlement programmes (Kachariadih – Disability Certificates have been provided in this village where most of the villagers are disabled) and schemes with prime focus on NREGS. SHGs have bagged NREGS project worth Rs. 4 Lakh in this cluster. Awareness is being spread through the grass-root staffs for using RTI
- The organizational development process, MIS & development tracking systems have improved among the CSOs of this cluster, Gender Policy Action Plan has been developed
- Support is provided for CSO's Proposal Development & Liaison for funds

Madhubani (Mithila) Cluster

- Formed Bihar Rajya Suchana Adikar Prahri soon after the RTI Act was implemented; its main activity is making the rural community/organizations aware of the provisions of RTI, the method and formalities of getting information & liaison at the district and state level for any impediments in getting the information.
- Approximately 300 cases have been registered in one subdivision (Jhanjharpur) of Madhubani alone and about 10-15 % replies have come. PACS is gearing for large scale advocacy on RTI; the PACS-CSOs along with other Delhi based organizations have significant role in the opening of the RTI state level call center
- Two organizations have completed their social audit – GPSVS & Grameen Sewa. GPSVS has published a book on it and is gearing for next phase.
- PACS helped about 650 PRI marginalized women candidates win the PRI elections thus providing a major boost to the grass root development process.

- PACS is facilitating in the formation & training of the CBOs that can help the community during the times of floods. It is also promoting multiple and optional cropping systems in the region.
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Abbreviations

BDO	Block Development Officer
CO	Circle Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	Development Alternative
DFID	Department for International Development
DMC	Disaster Management Committee
HH	Household
ICAR	Indian Council for Agriculture Research
CHRI	Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
CMS	Catalyst Management Services
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NREGS	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NRSP	Natural Resource Systems Programme
PACS	Poorest Areas Civil Society
PLW	Peer Learning Workshop
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
PST	Programme Support Team
RDD	Rural Development Department
RMK	Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
RTI	Right to Information
RO	Resource Organization
SBCA	State Based Communication Agency
SHG	Self Help Group
SIDBI	Small Industries Development Bank of India

Participant's List

21st Century Gram Vikas sansthan	S N Thakur	Nav Bharat Kalyan Pratishtahan Kendra	Subhash Chandra
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Arpan Gram Vikas Samiti	Ram babu	Patna Zila Gramin Vikas Samiti	PACS
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Avidya Vimukti sansthan	Sanjay Kumar	Rajaram Mohan Roy Smarak sansthan	Priyadarshi
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	Mr. Ravi Shankar	Samtamulak Samaj Vikas Kendra	Om Satyam Triveer
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Commissioner, RDD, Bihar	Anup Mukerji	Sarvodaya Ashram	Uma Shankar
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BRLP	Mukesh	Sevayatan	Sudhir Kumar
State RTI	SK Mishra	Shakti Vardhani	Priyashankar
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Jan Sewa Samiti	Bhuvnesh Prasad Singh	Un Millenium campaign	Ajit Sahi
JSK	Rajdeo	Jay Prabha Gram Vikash Mandal	Sri Shividhar Raj
janakansha	Bhogendra Mishra	Gita Mahila Uthan Samitti	Mani Pandey
Jan Nirman	Anup Kanti	Mahila Bal Jyoti Kendra	Manti Verma
KSA	Vijay Kumar	Institute of Homeo care & research	Hareram Pandey
Lok Swarajya Sangh	Sachchidanand	Prakhand Gram swarajya sabha	Baleshwar Prasad
Mahila Development Center	Param hans	Bihar Dalit vikash Samiti	Dr. Josh Kananaik
MVS	Leela Kumari	Kanti Shri Sewa Samitti	Kanti Gupta

Srijan Bihar Society for Awareness & Development	Shyam Kumar singh Munnial	Gramin Swathya Seva Kendra	Purnima Mishra
SSVK	Ashok Singh	Mahila Vikash Samiti	Mahesh Kumar
CPSL	Binod Kumar Secretary	Binoba Arogya Evam Lok Shikshan Kendra	Vinod Sharma
Karma	Sunil, Prakash,	Mahila Sewak Samaj	sabiha Naaz
Prakhand lok vikas samiti	Ashok	C-Dot	R.R.Kalyan
Gram Samagra	Mahavir Prasad Mahto	Sradha Niketan	Bashitha Narayan Singh
Vikash Parishad	Laxmi Dutta Jha	Kasturva Sewa	Ashok Kumar Singh
Gram samagra seva Sansthan	Sangita Kumari	Lok Vikas Sansthan	Subhash Dubey
Mahila Vikash Ashram	Vishwanath Mishra	Lok Vikas Sansthan	Subhash Dubey
CPSL	Prabhat, Brijesh	BSS	Saurabh Suman
Gramin Seva	Devnath Devan	Jan Vikas Naugachia Jan Vikas Lok Karyakaram	Majeed
MBJS	Lajwanti Jha	Aadhaav	M.M Thakur
Sajhia Samang	Manish Manohar	Adhar	Mr. Piyush
Ban Hock Sadan	Sister Celestine	Development Alternative	Mr. Lyer
Abha Welfare Society	Vijay Kumar	PACS	Kiran Sharma
IIKARD	Nagendra Singh	MPRLP	Dr.A.K Basu
Baba Institute of Social Services	Arbind Kumar Singh	Prayas Samiti	Mr. S.N Pandey
Jan Vikas Samiti	S.P. Chaorasiya	Rashtriya vikas Evam Samaj Kalyan Parishad	Pankaj Kumar
Karma	Alpan	Jan Vikas Naugachia Jan Vikas Lok Karyakaram	Mokhtarul Haque
BSS	S. rai	Aadhaav	Majeed
Mahila Jagrit Kendra	Manju Devi	Adhar	M.M Thakur
Rashtriya vikas Evam Samaj Kalyan Parishad	Mokhtarul Haque	Development Alternative	Mr. Piyush
Gramin Swathya Seva Kendra	Purnima Mishra	PACS	Mr. Lyer
Mahila Vikash Samiti	Mahesh Kumar	MPRLP	Kiran Sharma
Binoba Arogya Evam Lok Shikshan Kendra	Vinod Sharma	Prayas Samiti	Dr.A.K Basu
Mahila Sewak Samaj	sabiha Naaz	MPRLP	Mr. S.N Pandey
smc	Renji	Prayas Samiti	Pankaj Kumar
Sradha Niketan	Bashitha Narayan Singh	Kasturva Sewa	Ashok Kumar Singh

