

# Progress - Update

PACS-Bihar

November 2005-March 2006



## Poorest Areas Civil Society Program

**Management Consultants**



Development Alternatives



Pricewaterhouse Coopers (P) Ltd.

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# Progress Update

(Nov. 2005-March 2006)

The following progress update is made chronologically and tries to succinctly bring out the planning, activities, and the outcomes of PACS in Bihar. It is not an exhaustive report; the objective of this report is to give a bird's eye view on the progress made in the State through PACS initiatives. The current progress update is taken up from the month of November 2005 after the National conference held in October in Delhi, till March 2006.

## **PST meeting (November 2005)**

The Program Support Team (PST) met on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> November 2005 to review the progress of the past month and plan out the future course of action. The state coordinator of VANI and two Basix representatives participated in the meeting for the first time. Presentation on two projects (NBSKPK and GENVP) was made. The outline of the synthesis report was discussed upon and responsibilities were assigned to the resource organizations. Presentation was made on livelihood by the resource organizations. Representative of VANI presented its activities and strategy to promote PACS in Bihar. He was asked by the house to make a more focused presentation. Representatives of Basix and the Ros discussed in detail the strategy on livelihood promotion in Bihar. Basix's representative urged the need of a thorough study of specific areas with the support of the ROs for building effective livelihood strategy.

## **Organization Development Workshop (December 2005)**

From 1-5<sup>th</sup> December 2005 the Resource Organizations attended the workshop on Organization Development at Lucknow. The purpose of the workshop was to capacitate the resource organizations and through them transmit the OD techniques to the CSOs. Organization Development Self Analysis (ODSA) tool was developed and tested by the participants during the workshop. Internal mapping on the inherent capacity of the participant was also done. It was suggested that there is a further need of such ODSA training programs to capacitate the trainees. It was also suggested that ROs should select 5 CSOs and include external experts for the ODSA exercise in their respective states.

### **PST meeting (December 2005)**

The next PST meet was held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2005. During the meeting ROs presented the status report of their clusters. It was pointed out that a separate mechanism besides MEAL reporting should be developed to capture the process related to SHGs. It was suggested that ROs should discuss within their team on issue of demystification of ODSA and how it needs to be further addressed in Bihar PACS program. On similar lines gender strategy paper should be taken up for discussion in the team. Besides that, the ROs discussed upon (a) PLW to be held in March 2006 (b) broad outline of Panchayati Raj Abhiyan (c) agenda of Panchayat Workshop to be held on 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> January 2006 and (d) Agenda of the state core group (SCG) meeting to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2005 at ICAR.

### **State SCG meeting with ICAR, Bihar (December 2005)**

As a follow-up of “State Development Conference”, a State Core Group meeting was convened by PACS-Bihar at ICAR (Indian Council for Agriculture and Research). The focus of this meeting was *Convergence of PACS with Nabard and the ICAR*. The meeting was held at ICAR-WALMI complex on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2005, and was attended by representatives from ICAR, NABARD, head of CSOs (IDF, NIDAN & GPSVS) who are the members of the Core Group, and PACS Project Support Team (PST). PACS goal objectives, achievements and the probable role of the ICAR and NABARD were discussed. The need for linkage of groups with financial institution was emphasized to replace borrowing from informal sector. NABARD representative expressed his full support. Dr. Alok Sikka, Director ICAR extended his full support to the PACS initiatives and emphasized the need of collaboration for spreading good practices to the whole of Bihar (he also wrote story on behalf of ICAR that got published in Vikas Vikulp – Bihar Special).

### **Bihar Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan Workshop (January 2006)**

PACS is running an extensive campaign named PACS-Bihar Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan in the whole of Bihar. The campaign aims at strengthening local governance through massive awareness generation, facilitating genuine and marginalized candidates fight the election and their capacity building after the elections.

To work out a strategy on how to build the required environment for the Panchayat election, a two-day workshop was organized with all the 84 CSO partners, State Based Resource Organizations and MC, in the premises of Nav Jyoti Niketan, Patna on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2006. A core committee (nominated CSO representatives, ROs and the SBCA) was formed that was to support the *Panchayat Team* (3 members) specially constituted to execute this campaign.

The roles and responsibilities of the state level team and the CSOs were decided in this workshop. Panchayat Team with the state based core committee was supposed to develop and deliver the awareness materials, liaison with the government and other state level agencies, sensitise media at the state level while at the local level the CSOs were supposed to execute the awareness generation programs with the support of the CBOs, media and the government officials.

### **Highlights of the Activities undertaken by PACS-Bihar Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan**

- ✓ The Core committee met every month to follow up and to plan the future course of action.
- ✓ State level ToT was organized from 18<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> January while in the month of February all the four cluster level ToTs were organized
- ✓ Training and orientation to kala-jatha were given to all the artists selected by CSOs in their respective clusters
- ✓ Resource materials were developed and printed by Panchayat Abhiyan team and PACS-SBCA and distributed to all the CSOs
- ✓ Extensive liaison was done with the government officials and with the organizations working on Panchayat Sashaktikaran in Bihar. Meeting was organized with the SBCA, Panchayat team, Cencord and Hunger project (these two organizations are also working on strengthening Panchayat in Bihar). Another meeting was organized with the State Election Secretary Sri Raghuvansh jee and the Panchayat Team and SBCA. The SBCA took the interview on camera, which was shown to all the CSOs in the cluster PLW.
- ✓ State level Press Conference was organized in January and in March. District level Media briefing was done in all the clusters. Media invitation was given in all the events organized at the state and district level. (Appropriate coverage has been given by both print and electronic media – see *www.empowerpoor.org* )

### **PST meeting (January 2006)**

The next PST meeting was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2006. “Proact” joined the PST in place of Praxis as the new RO. During the meeting CSO wise presentation was made by the ROs for their respective cluster. Detail planning was made and responsibilities of ROs were more refined for PEVAC -PR elections 2006. The house decided to conduct PLW at two levels – (a) Cluster level; and (b) State level. It was decided that the workshops would try to invite representatives of institutions such as State Agricultural Universities, NABARD, etc and highlight issues such as Panchayati Raj, RTI, NREGA, livelihood, etc. On the basis of the feedbacks from MC, the State

Synthesis report was discussed upon. Besides, ODSA and gender mainstreaming strategy were discussed in the House along with the need to standardize MEAL reporting format for better output indicators from CSOs.

### **Resource Organization Meet at Delhi (February 2006)**

The national resource organization meet was held in Delhi on 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> February 2006 to share the experiences of the ongoing activities and also plan out the future course of action in the states. Incorporating NREGS and RTI into the PACs programme were discussed at length. Program evaluation format was developed and the team was nominated which consisted of ROs representatives, MC and the external experts (N K Bahatt and Raghvan Suresh). The major issues to be touched upon in this evaluation were; program management, entitlement realizations, affectivity and sustainability. A day before the RO meet, presentation was made by all the SBCA to the MC on the progress of their activities and the house discussed upon how to increase the visibility of the PACS issues and how SBCAs can help in the proper implementation of NREGS and RTI.

### **PST meeting (February 2006)**

The next PST was organized on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2006. Two of the ROs presented cluster level reviews in the house. The agenda of the cluster level PLW was refined and made more focused. NREGS and RTI were two of the important areas and the ROS discussed on how to bring out the collective need and strategy for the same from the cluster level workshops. The SBCA was asked to attend and impart communication skills in three of the cluster level workshop and make an audio-visual film. The Panchayat team heading the Panchayat sahshaktikaran abhiyan updated the house with the campaign. The resource organizations detailed on the Terms of Reference, the design and framework and also about the participants for “project evaluation” discussed in the RO meet in New Delhi.

### **World education NFE foundation skill training (Feb .March 2006)**

In continuation with the previous capacity building and experience sharing programs for the partner CSOs, PACS organized a five-day workshop on “Non Formal Education Foundation Skills” to the CSOs from the Madhubani cluster. The workshop was organized at Madhubani, Bihar, from 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2006 to 4<sup>th</sup> March 2006 at the premises of Gram Vikas Parishad. The Resource persons were from World Education and representatives of 53 CSOs participated in this workshop.

The objectives of the workshop were; (a) to share experiences in capacity building, (b) experiment with participatory adults learning methods and approaches and assess their appropriateness to work with SHGs and CSOs, (c) Identify and outline capacity building needs of participating (NGOs) CSOs, and (d) develop a joint action plan of participants and World Education.

The workshop was designed in such a way that it could adequately serve capacity building needs of participating NGOs. The insights and products of this workshop are to be used as a basis for developing an outline for a joint action plan of CSOs and World Education.

#### **Cluster level PLW**

Four Cluster level PLW were organized by the resource organizations with support of the CSOs. NREGS, RTI and the livelihood were some of the important issues discussed in detail in these cluster level workshops. The Nawada cluster organized the PLW from 10<sup>th</sup> –11<sup>th</sup> March 2006, Gaya Cluster organized from 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> March 2006, Madhubani cluster PLW was organized from 20<sup>th</sup> –21<sup>st</sup> March 2006, while in Mujaffarpur cluster, PLW was organized from 17<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> March 2006. The CSOs were asked to come up with the specific challenges, probable solutions on implementing the PACS program and integrating NREGS and RTI. They were also asked to come up with the requirements from the resource organizations and the MC so that it could be presented at the State level PLW for a joint action plan. The SBCA gave basic tips on audio-visual and still photography and also took shots for an audio-visual film. Media gave proper coverage of the cluster PLW in two of the clusters.

#### **PST meeting (March 2006)**

PST meeting was conducted on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2006 two days before the State PLW. Besides the presentation on project evaluation by the ROs, the PST focused upon the outcomes of the cluster level PLW and on fine-tuning the state level PLW to be held after two days. The agenda of state level PLW was discussed in detail, minor changes were made and roles and responsibilities of the resource organizations were finalized. The PACS- Panchayat Team consisting of the convener and his two assistants updated the house with the progress of Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan and discussed on the presentation to be made at the state level PLW. A film made by the SBCA (PACS-ki Roop Rekha) on the developments of PACS focusing on the outcomes of the cluster PLW was screened. The same film was shown in the state level PLW on 27<sup>th</sup> march 2006.

### **State level PLW**

The cluster level PLWs were designed in such a way that the thoughts coming out from the clusters would be jointly discussed at the state level PLW and a future course of action would be developed with the experienced resource persons. With this goal the state level PLW was organized in Patna on the 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> March 2006. NREGS, RTI, Livelihood, Gender, Panchayati Raj, Fund Raising were some of the major highlights of the workshop. Dr. K C Malhotra explained the NREGS fundamentals while D. P Maheshwari, Election Commissioner explained in detail the election norms in the forthcoming panchayat elections. S S Sandhu gave tips on fundraising while John Guant discussed livelihood issues in the workshop. Resource material such as booklets on NREGS and on RTI were distributed to the CSOs. A film made on the achievements of PACs focusing on the cluster PLWs was shown in the workshop. Media (both electronic and print) gave proper coverage to the workshop (see [www.empowerpoor.org](http://www.empowerpoor.org)). Interviews of Dr. KC Malhotra and Rakesh Jha were telecast on E-TV and Cable channel.

### **Progress in the Fields**

**Since Bihar Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan has been launched and elections are nearby, most of the CSOs are involved with this campaign. Following is a glimpse of their achievements: (figures as on March 29<sup>th</sup> 2006):**

- ✓ Over 1182 candidates are being supported by the PACS-SHG's and many of these are SHG members themselves while some are the field staffs of the CSOs. So far the SHGs have been able to promote 24 consensus candidates (no candidate is fighting against them in the panchayat)
- ✓ Over 10,000 candidates got information from the 500 panchayat information centres. About 500 people mostly candidates got information through the help-line: 0612-5588104
- ✓ Skits (Kala Jatha) are being performed in every Panchayat by CSOs; posters & pamphlets are being distributed in every Panchayat and the audio cassette on Panchayat abhiyan has become quite popular among the villagers
- ✓ Media coverage in both print and electronic has been appropriate. E-T.V and Sahara along with all the local dailies covered most of our events organized at the district level.

### **Special Mention**

Kacharia Dih is a village located in Rajauli block of Nawada district in Bihar. Most of the scheduled caste people are disabled due to contaminated water in the village. Drinking water in the village contains excessive fluoride, which is thought to be the reason behind this tragedy.

PACS-CSO “MVS” has helped the villagers in getting Indira-Awas. They are promoting savings and also helping them in getting job cards made under NREGS.

### **Appropriate practices - from the CSO’s Desk**

#### ***Nidan’s effort on Cooperative formation***

With the support of PACS, Nidan is promoting cooperatives for enhancing livelihood opportunities in villages as well as small towns. It has facilitated in the formation of over 10 cooperatives that are intensively working in making food products, files, folders, thrift and credit and in marketing of these products.

Of these, the most popular and successful is **Sangam Jute Utpad Samiti** that is involved in making variety of Jute products. Sangam Jute Utpad Samiti is a women cooperative of 2-4 villages in Prampur Block of Katihar district in Bihar. Around 50 women are involved in this cooperative. They make jute products at a center that are mostly marketed by “Usha Arcade” an outlet of these products in Patna city which is owned by another cooperative group facilitated by Nidan.

Most of the villagers working for Sangam Jute Utpad Samiti fall below the poverty line. Earlier they used to sell raw jute to the middlemen or make products in an unorganized manner that fetched them little profit. The area is remote and the mode of transport is limited due to bad condition of the road.

### **Challenges and Appropriate Practices**

**Formation of Sangam Jute Utpad Samiti:** The first challenge of Nidan was to organize them in a cooperative so that they produce collectively and get the real value of their products. Initially it conducted several meetings in the village to induce a sense of confidence, collective feeling and ownership among the women. It provided seed money and also the administrative expenses provided by the PACs program, and got it linked with a bank. The credit provided to the SHG members (most of whom are also members of this cooperative) gives these women added advantage in managing production and other expenses.

**Capacity Building & Skill Development:** The next challenge was to make them aware of the cooperative functioning and its administration for which it organized several capacity building programs and took them for exposure. It provided trainings to chisel their potential in making jute products.

**Marketing of Products:** Marketing of products was another challenge, which was sorted out by liaison with another cooperative promoted by Nidan. The marketing cooperative has an outlet

called Usha Arcade in Patna city that not only sells the products at the outlet but also markets it through stalls and by other means.

**Health of Members:** Nidan has also facilitated these cooperatives in providing the option for insurance schemes related to life, health and accidents, by LIC and Seva

**Self-Sustaining:** Nidan since the beginning is nudging the members to handle the financial and the administrative aspects of the cooperative by themselves. All the capacity building programs are aimed at making this cooperative sustaining as soon as possible. The disbursement of administrative expenses to cooperative was another step in this direction. At present the members handle the administrative and financial aspects of the cooperative, without the support of Nidan.

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