

**Proceedings of the Second Peer Review Workshop for PACS partners in MP and
Chhattisgarh
16-18th March 2004
Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh**

Background

The poorest Area Civil Society (PACS) program is operational in around 100 poorest districts of India located in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. It aims at supporting Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to implement projects in line with the thematic areas defined by PACS. At present eight projects are being implemented in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Peer Review Workshops are held every six months with an objective to bring all PACS partners, lead and network, on a common platform of mutual sharing and learning. The workshop was held in Chhindwara and coordinated by Institute for Development of Youth Women and Child (IDYWC), the PACS partner in Chhindwara. The main objectives of the workshop were in continuation of the efforts made in the first workshop held in Bhopal in August 2003. An attempt was made to share experiences and learning's from the work of CSOs implementing PACS projects in field.

Day I: Process details

Session I: Opening Session

The workshop started with a welcome address by Mrs. Seema Sadiq. This was followed by a brief introduction of the participants and their organisations. **(Annexure I List of participants)**

Session II: Overview of the peer review efforts

Mr. Rakesh Nath Tiwari from SAMARTHAN, on behalf of the core group of PACS partners of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, explained the concept of peer review and outlined the attempts made since the last peer group meeting in this regard. The process was described as that of 'learning from the group'. It was visualised as a means of being oriented on different issues and approaches of work in field. The initiatives in this regard were outlined and the visits to SAMARTHAN, Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) and IDYWC were explained in brief.

Session III: PACS program overview

Ms. Lata Raman from the Management Consultant's team (Development Alternatives) gave an overview of the programme across the six states with special emphasis on the status of projects in MP and Chhattisgarh. She laid attention on the changing focus of the PACS program, since its inception, from developing systems in the first year to mobilising projects in the second year gradually moving on to advocacy, which would be the thrust in the coming years.

She stressed on the fact that the focus for the next four years had to shift towards the integration of issues and on operationalising impact multiplication systems. This was in effort to intensify activities at cluster levels and provide platforms for advocacy on issues pertaining to the poor. The ultimate focus was to be maintained at developing and establishing sustainable mechanisms through capacity building and external partnerships with GOI, financial institutions and private players **(presentation attached annexure II)**.

Session IV: PACS program: State overview

Dr. Anwar Jafri from the Supportive Supervision Resource Organisation for MP and Chhattisgarh gave the overview of the PACs program in MP and Chhattisgarh. It was observed that local self-governance was the most widely covered thematic area in MP and Chhattisgarh whereas that of social cohesion was least covered in the two states.

He focused on the varied areas of expertise that had developed among the partners in the PACS program and stressed on the immense scope of sharing, possible amongst the organisation. He presented a framework to gauge the strength of the voluntary sector and the quality of program being implemented (**annexure III**).

Session V: Peer Review project visits

Concept and objectives: The peer review visits were planned to promote constructive criticism of the work done by various CSOs in field. The objectives of the visits are as under:

- Learning and sharing
- Strengthening CSOs and developing self critical and reflective habits
- Identifying common issues for advocacy and networking
- Establish strategies for capacity building on advocacy, networking, and institutional and programmatic capacity building.

It was decided that as the issue was sensitive and required discretion, the peer review would initially be started in the projects which had been initiated for at least a year. Three organisations qualified for this review viz. SAMARTHAN, VHAI, and IDYWC

The process: The initial exercise was aimed at bringing out the strength and the threats faced by the projects. The process involved visits of the field areas of any of organisations by the representatives of the other two organisations. These field visits involved meetings and interaction with both the community and the project staff. This was followed by a discussion with the project team for feedback and experience sharing. Where sharing of ideas to take place. The review visits were to be documented by the project team (Annexure) and presented as a report.

The review framework: The review visits were conducted on the basis of a framework developed in the preparatory meeting of the Madhya Pradesh Coordinating Committee held in Bhopal on 29th February in Bhopal. (**Please refer annexure IV**)

Visits, based on the above objectives and review frameworks, were conducted in the selected organisations. The findings of these visits were presented in the peer review meeting for further discussion and sharing.

Peer Review Visits: Presentations

The presentation aimed at spelling out the strategy and the corresponding activities used for implementing the project. It tried to showcase the visible impacts and the emerging issues from the intervention at the field level. A panel comprising of Ms. Ranu Bhogal (Project Development Resource Organisation), Mr. Anoop Sahai (ARAMBH), Mr. Rajesh Malviya (NIWCYD) and Ms. Harshlata Sibloon (ISSRD) was created to coordinate the discussion and analyse the discussion at the end of the session.

Presentation I

Organisation reviewed: SAMARTHAN, Sehore

Reviewing Organisations: MPVHA and PRAYAS/Institute for Development of Youth Women and Child

Date: 4/03/04

(Presentation enclosed as annexure V)

Key issues raised for discussion

- SAMARTHAN had followed a two-pronged strategy of intensive and extensive work in the field area. The participants were interested in the key features, which differentiated the two; It was clarified that all field interventions in the project area could be grouped under six heads viz. capacity building, information dissemination, promoting Gram Sabhas, micro planning, support to female representatives and local networking. The intensive work involved interventions of all the six types whereas extensive work emphasised on interventions in on a selected few heads.
- It was also suggested that strengthening of the CBOs could be taken up in an effort to ensure sustainability of the project in long run.
- The participants inquired about the internal monitoring system in SAMARTHAN. Mr. R.N.Tiwari informed that there were two forms of internal monitoring in the project implemented viz. a formal system of monitoring through regular reporting and informal system of monitoring through visits and some monitorable indicators.
- The participants also enquired about the challenges faced by SAMARTHAN in the formation of SHGs and promotion of income generating activities among the groups: According to Mr. R.N.Tiwari SAMARTHAN had limited expertise on SHGs and income generation activities (IGA) and had no immediate plan to develop it within the organisation. SAMARTHAN though was planning to share expertise on these subjects from organisations who had been working on these issues and had over the years developed expertise on them.
- The review team was of the view that the linkages with government agencies were weak in the field area. The SAMARTHAN team though clarified that the observation might be true for the villages visited but could not be generalized as there were number of government programs that were being implemented by SAMARTHAN in the field area.
- It was observed by a few members of the group that most of the interventions by the PACS partners in the field of governance were concentrated only at the Gram Panchayat level. The interventions at the block and district level in this field were few in number and not as intensive.

Presentation II

Organisation reviewed: PRAYAS / Institute for Development of Youth Women and Child

Reviewing organisations: Voluntary Health Association of India (Tarun Sanskar) and SAMARTHAN

Date: 14/03/04 and 15/03/04

(Presentation enclosed as annexure VI)

Key issues raised for discussion:

- It was suggested by the review team that a separate forum may be created for women and adolescent girls, as there are certain issues, which are central to them. These may not come out in a large community based group such as the *Adivasi Shramik Sangathan*, which is a common group for males and females.
- It was felt that interventions were based on the *Adivasi Shramik Sangathan* formed by the organisation. A need to bring the panchayats in the purview of our work was felt. PRAYAS though had the philosophy that smaller groups such as the *Adivasi Shramik Sangathan* would collectively form the *Gram Sabha*. Thus strengthening of these smaller groups would in turn strengthen the *Gram Sabha* in the long run.

- The review team brought out the strengths of a large group (*Adivasi Shramik Sangathan*) but also pointed out the possibility of lack of space for groups smaller in size. This may mean that certain issues, which may be of concern to the poorest in the group, may be left out.
- It was observed by the review committee that PRAYAS had strong links with the government agencies. This had been the result of the long-term efforts that had been put in by the organisation functionaries.
- The sustainability of the *Adivasi Shramik Sangathan* was discussed. PRAYAS had the policy of identifying issues of common interest, which could be resolved by the collective action of the group. This was so as to instill a sense of achievement in the community. This in the longer run would help them in working towards achieving more difficult goals.

Presentation III

Organisation reviewed: TARUN SANSKAR (Voluntary Health Association of India)

Reviewing Organisation: Institute for Development of Youth Women and Child and SAMARTHAN

Date: 10/03/04

(Presentation enclosed as annexure VII)

Key issues raised for discussion:

- It was observed by the review team that the project had been experiencing a high turn over rate in staff, which had posed a new challenge of initiating capacity-building activities for the staff. It was suggested that such initiatives were a necessity as they may affect the performance of the project in the long run. The representatives of VHAI assured that such initiatives were being planned. To orient the project staff regular interactions were being planned with the VHAI team which is highly experienced and specializes in related fields
- Interventions in the projects were based on the differentiating of *panchayats* as *Saghan Panchayats* and other *panchayats*. The group was interested in the characteristics, which differentiated a *Saghan Panchayats* from the other regular *panchayats*. *Saghan Panchayats* according to the representatives of VHAI were those *panchayats*, which were identified to have *panchayat* functionaries who were sensitive to the development requirements and were willing to take initiative in development related work. Thus *panchayats* were categorised as *Saghan Panchayats* based on the response of the *panchayat* functionaries and the possibilities of development that emerged in the villages during the course of the baseline survey conducted before the initiation of the project.
- An institution called the *Gram Samiti* had been created under the project. The group was interested in the nature and relation of the *Samiti* with the *Gram Panchayats*. The representatives from VHAI clarified that a community-based group was formed keeping in mind the dispersed nature of households and villages in forest area. Thus representatives from such dispersed cluster formed the *Gram Samiti*. It by no means was related to any other samiti formed under the *Panchayati Raj* act. It was envisaged to form a pressure group in the *Gram Sabhas* and raise issues of concern to people. It also acted as a monitoring agency for the eight *Samitis* formed at the gram panchayat level and acted as contact person for interventions planned in the area.
- The group requested the VHAI team to share their experiences in terms of the visible changes brought in by the interventions in the project area. The team was of the view that interventions in the area had resulted in a certain degree of positive change. This may though be termed as just the beginning of the change envisaged. For example initially there had been no *Gram Sabhas* in the area since 2001. The *Gram Sabhas* are now being

held and the community has been involved in the decision making process at the village level. Similarly efforts are being put in to minimize distress migration in the area.

- Concern was shown by participants on the implementation strategy of the program. The strategy involved categorization of villages based on seven themes (**See annexure VI Page I**). The concern was based on the fact that categorization of villages on these issues may actually narrow down the scope of interventions in the villages and thus may neglect other development aspects. It was clarified by the VHAI team that the categorization of villages on the seven themes did not mean the exclusion of other intervention in the village. Categorization just emphasised the main focus of interventions in the villages.
- The group also felt that creation of alternate institutions with similar functions as the eight *Gram Samitis* may actually further dilute the objective of strengthening them. The VHAI team though was of the view that the eight samitis had been created for namesake and were mostly defunct. Thus, the village institutions would help in revitalising them and in many cases develop the capacities of people to be a part of such samitis in future.

Session VI: Feedback on program development and discussion on related issues

The session aimed at bringing out issues that had emerged over a period of time and were related to project development and supportive supervision. Ms. Lata Raman and Ms Ranu Bhogal facilitated the session. The session spelled out the sequence of activities involved in the preparation and appraisal of the proposals that were submitted for approval and support and touched on certain trends that had emerged over -time in this process. The main issues that came up for discussion have been listed below:

- It had been observed during the appraisal process that some organisations had been trying to include all the five thematic areas of the PACS program in proposals sent by them for support. This had often led to development of over ambitious projects not conforming to the capacities of the organisations. It was suggested to keep this in mind for future.
- It had also been observed that, proposals sent by organisations were often prepared not by the organisations but by consultants/outside for the organisations. It had been observed that in some cases biases of such people got reflected in the proposals prepared for support. This often leads to a large list of activities, which may not be required. This has often been the case for modification of project proposals.
- The participants were also informed about the new opportunity for existing partners of seeking support for supplementary projects and for partners to develop independent. While opening the Pandora's box, caution was expressed that the processing of the request for both the supplementary and new proposals would be based on evaluation and assessment. It was though suggested that such support may be opted for after assessing the organisational capacity to implement such projects.
- The participants were also informed about the suggestion made in the DFID review meeting to involve the PDRO in the programme beyond just proposal development. It was suggested that the PDRO could be involved more in the initial stages of project development. The was suggested that the PDRO would be involved in the orientation meeting for smooth transition and also in the capacity building initiatives of the partner organisations.

Representatives of various organisations made some suggestions to the team facilitating the session. They have been listed below:

- Organisations while implementing the project at field levels often realise the redundancy of or the need for certain activities. This may though not have been foreseen in the

project proposal. Thus to increase the flexibility of the program it was suggested that a platform may be created where such changes may be proposed and approved as per its relevance to the success of the project. It was suggested that the SSRO, PDRO and the representatives of the MC may be involved in formation of such a platform.

- It was also believed that the resource organisations involved in developing the project proposals have a better understanding of activities. Thus, their involvement in orientation and capacity building could help in better conceptualization of the tasks at the field level.

Session VII: Learning's from the program

The session was facilitated by Dr. Anwar Jafri from the SSRO. The session emphasised on the learning's at three levels, viz. the program/project level, organisational levels and at the level of networks developed in the program. The main issues discussed at each level are as under **(presentation attached as annexure VIII)**

- At the program and the project level, it had been observed that the partner NGOs had developed expertise in various areas that come under the thematic areas. It was though felt that in some cases the objectives of these programs were over ambitious and romantic whereas in some they were too modest. It also touched on learning's on staff strengthening and strategizing.
- The sessions also touched on the learning's from the institutional functions. It was observed that the implementation of the program was based on the level to which the partners had developed as an organisation. This was reflected in the strategy, structure and the development of human resource in the organisation. This had a bearing on development of programs within the organisations.
- The session stressed on networks developed as instruments of developing an information base and platforms for sharing and lobbying on issues of common interests.

This was followed by a group exercise aimed at finding answers to the following questions:

- Two main strengths and the weaknesses of the project team.
- Two main strengths and weaknesses of the organisations.
- Two main strengths and weaknesses of inter organisational relationships that had developed over the years.

The summarized findings are as under:

Project Level Strength/Weakness Analysis

S.No.	Strengths	Weakness
1	Local functionaries and good coordination with the community	Results/outcomes not only dependent on the organisation but also dependent a lot on the external environment.
2	Good matching between PACS objectives and Government's policy-Common agenda	Lack of experience of large scale implementation
3.	Local and committed functionaries	Limitations in the technical capacities of the staff
4.	Projects in very interior areas addressing poorest areas	Weakness in documentation
5.	Good matching between project and organisational objectives	New area therefore lack of involvement of community

6.		Opposition from people with vested interests
7.		Lack of mobility
8.		Projects lack deliverables

Organisational Level Strength/Weakness Analysis

S.No.	Strengths	Weakness
1	Skillful human resource at the organisation level	Lack of documentation about management systems
2	Dedicated leadership	No provision regarding social security
3.		Lack of platforms for cross sharing of experiences and learning from different programmes/projects

Institutional Level Strength/Weakness Analysis

S.No.	Strengths	Weakness
1	Benefits of being part of a network	Delay in fund flow
2	Multiple donor partnerships	Lack of knowledge on resource mobilisation
3	Benefits of experience	Mutual understanding lacking – No Common voice
4	Sharing of expertise –networking	Lack of networking at district level
5	Support in program implementation by networking	Differences in acts / rules make national level networking more challenging
6	Benefits of a mix of new and old NGOs	Tendency at national level network partners to pass on knowledge downwards / network benefits not shared equally
7		Mutual competition at district / local levels
8		Problems when there is no relations in past

Day II Process Details

Session I: Comments by panel

The first session was devoted to the analysis by the review panel of the discussion on the peer review presentations held on the day I of the workshop. The major issues that came up during the analysis by the panel are as under:

- It was observed that the main challenge faced by all the organisation was that of the limited reach of the field workers in the field. This was a greater challenge for the organisations considering that most organisations were creating CBOs, to assist implementation of the program, which demanded considerable time of the field workers. It was thus important to capacitate the field workers according to the demands arising from the project.
- It also emerged from the discussion that organisations didn't have the expertise to cater to all needs arising from the field. For example in case of SAMARTHAN, the organisation didn't have the expertise to develop and implement a livelihood program. It was thus important to develop linkages with other partner NGOs so as to benefit from the expertise of other organisations.
- The panel was of the view that the relations with the government/*sarpanch* traditionally tend to turn sore, due to attempts to strengthen the PRIs. It was though emphasised that a balance may be created while implementing the programs. This was to associate with the government line departments and panchayat functionaries with the project and also benefit from the government structure.
- The panel stressed on the sustainability aspect of the program. It was of the view that though projects under PACS were being supported for 4 years, the initiatives could be sourced from other programs and partners, as activities under it were a part of the overall attempts of organisations. Moreover the objective over this period should be to enable the community to develop as an institution and capacitate them to plan for its own development.
- It was also felt that, it was important for organisations to initially take up achievable objectives under the project. This was to promote a sense of achievement within the community, which would motivate and prepare them for achieving much more difficult objectives.
- The panel was also concerned over the creation of parallel institutions to the already existing institutions. The panel based its concern on two facts which are given as under:
 - What significance would the existing institutions have in development? Is it not possible to direct our energies at linking the community with the existing structures?
 - Would these newly created institutions be mainstreamed into the existing institutions? It was felt that creating institutions, which may not be linked to the mainstream, may actually act as negative force in development of the particular community.

Session II: Exploring Gender Dimension of Our Work

The session was facilitated by Ms Ranu Bhogal (PDRO) and Ms Meenu Vadera. It aimed at developing an understanding on various issues and concepts related to gender. An attempt was made to link these concepts and issues to the process of development and implementation of various programs within the organisation. **(Concepts discussed have been documented as annexure IX)**

The session laid emphasis on three basic issues; they have been listed below:

- How is gender issue being promoted: It is observed that in most cases the approach towards gender empowerment result in providing access. The issue is not of access rather

it is of control. Thus most programs, interventions and initiatives follow the wrong approach and hence fail to provide the desired result.

- Who are the implementers, influencers and players in such initiatives: In some of the programs the implementers, influencers and players may themselves not be sensitive to issues related to gender.
- What about programs: What in the program requires to be sensitized about gender issues. Is it the planning component, the implementation components, Monitoring etc? Ideally, it was felt that gender sensitization was required at all stages of development of the program.

This was followed by an activity wherein three participants, associated with three programs with different themes (Micro planning, Governance and Micro Credit) were requested to address the group on two issues viz.

How is the knowledge of gender being utilised in the work done by them?

How are the program and the methodology of its implementation affecting the status of women in the area?

The main issues that came up for discussion are as under:

- Most programs based on thematic areas are focused on bringing about change only in the related fields and neglect the overall picture. For example a program based on panchayat fails to address gender issues in daily life, which includes the family of the panchayat representatives. Thus there emerges a conflict in the conventional roles of females and that promoted by the program in panchayats. It is important to widen the program objectives and negotiate the traditional roles of women so as to bring about a balance in their lives.
- It is often found that our programs target at bringing changes, which do not correspond, to the objectives of the program. We often develop programs to provide access whereas the objective may only be fulfilled by promoting better or more control on resources. This issue needs to be addressed at the stage of planning all such programs.
- Programs often encourage and orient women to question and raise issues. Though it is also important to create an environment where they are given a hearing.
- It was also felt that most programs and intervention deal with the public life of women, but they fail to relate to their personal life. Thus a woman has to be associated with both the traditional relations and the new relations that develop due to programs and initiatives. This often overburdens them with new roles and responsibilities in addition to the existing traditional roles. This aspect needs to be addressed while implementing all programs.

Session III: Supportive Supervision: Experiences and Learning

The session, facilitated by Dr. Anwar Jafri, aimed at sharing the experiences of the SSRO team during its association with the PACS program. The session was planned to discuss issues that may help in evolving a better supportive and monitoring mechanism. The major issues that came up for discussion are as under:

- It was observed that the reporting had become very mechanical. It was suggested that the reporting formats could be modified for providing more flexibility and space to express qualitative observations.
- It was also observed that reporting in some cases had become very descriptive and was devoid of any analysis. It was suggested that to address this issue, qualitative indicators should be developed by the CSOs so as facilitate reporting of qualitative aspects.
- It was also suggested that a descriptive report may be sent on a periodic basis for sharing among the CSOs and better understanding of issues in field.

- Some CSOs were concerned about the medium of reporting. It was decided that reporting within the organisation could be in the local language. It was though important that all reports that were to be sent to the resource organisations and the management consultants were prepared in English.

Session IV: Advocacy Overview

The session, facilitated by Dr. Anwar Jafri, was planned with a two point agenda of orienting the participants on the concept of advocacy, identifying issues and strategies for advocacy at the state level and develop an advocacy plan for selected sectors. The sessions helped the participants to develop an understanding on the basic concept, instruments and approaches to advocacy and formulation of advocacy plans. **(Presentation attached as annexure X)**

The group identified three main areas of interest, which may require advocating. These are listed in the table below:

S.No.	Areas of common interest	Issues that may be advocated
1	Livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Change in policy and programs related to livelihoods. ➤ Control on natural resources ➤ Minimum and equal wages for all ➤ Distribution and ownership of land ➤ Pricing of MFP (Fair Trading) ➤ Employment to people in local village development ➤ Migration and exploitation on work place
2.	Women's Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advocacy among public, at policy level and with professionals on improving standards of education for girls. ➤ Women's health ➤ 50 % reservation for women at all public offices and in all elected seats. ➤ Better government schemes and policies for the benefit of women ➤ Stopping dis-empowerment practices of women. ➤ Participation of women in social/political and administrative system. ➤ Economic upliftment of women.
3.	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To establish <i>Gram Sabha</i> as an independent body. ➤ To abolish the 2-child norm made essential for being elected as representative in panchayat. ➤ To empower women through empowerment of <i>Gram Sabha</i> ➤ Advocating among people in NGOs to put in efforts for empowerment of <i>panchayats</i>. ➤ To advocate for more clarity in the rules and processes in <i>panchayat/PESA Adhinium</i>.

This was followed by a group exercise. It was decided to divide all participants into groups based on common social and geographical similarities, partners of the same network and distance between the project areas, for regional coordination on such issues. Such groups were to identify issues of common interest and develop a common strategy for advocating them. It was also agreed that practical and viable strategies would be developed, such that none of the partners may get excluded on the basis of size, resources or manpower. Three levels of advocacy emerged from the plans prepared by all the groups. These have been discussed below in brief.

- Advocacy among the people or a focused group in the villages of the project area. This was to be effected through information dissemination and awareness building campaigns.
- Advocate the issue amongst the administration and the local MLAs and MPs or at legislative houses. This was to enable a policy change if required.
- Advocacy among the general masses. This was to be done through the use of various modes of communication. Such as campaigns on mass media.

The major issues that came up for discussion during the group presentation are as under:

- It was agreed by the group that orienting the community about their rights and benefits would be of paramount interest to any advocacy plan.
- It was realised that advocacy on any issue may lead to a situation of conflict with the powerful sections in the village. It was agreed by the group that such situation could be tackled effectively by bringing together the exploited sections of the community on a common platform, which will definitely be more in number to the exploitative class. It was also agreed that there could be other tools such as media and other like-minded influential people who may help the campaign.
- The group was of the view that each one of them had been in some form or the other being advocated issues. It had been though at different level and scales. The group realised that to make such attempts more effective, it would be prudent to identify issues of common interest and join hands in advocating them at a larger scale and different levels.

It was decided to develop local groups of partner NGOs, based on common culture, geographical similarities and distance among the project area, for regional coordination on such issues. Such groups were to identify issues of common interest and develop a common strategy for advocating them. It was also agreed that practical and viable strategies would be developed, such that none of the partners may get excluded on the basis of size, resources or manpower.

The coordination committee of MP and Chhattisgarh took up the responsibility to follow-up on the efforts made with this regard and provide support to such groups. Support could come in the form of workshops on thematic areas for better understanding or as per the need that may emerge in due course.

Day III Process Details

Session I: Capacity Building Needs Assessment

The session was facilitated by Mr. Raghvesh Ranjan from Development Alternatives. The session aimed at briefing the participants about the capacity building initiative of the PACS programme for the partners and also shared the analysis of the training needs assessment carried out through a questionnaire survey. The session also attempted to bring out the different levels of trainings and the learning's from the past experiences in organising trainings.

The questionnaire analysis identified four broad areas of trainings:

- Institutional Development

- Training in functional areas
- Thematic and programme areas
- Skill-based livelihood generation

This was followed by a group exercise in which all participants were divided into three groups as per their interest in the major heads identified through the TNA exercise. The groups were assigned the task of listing down the areas under these heads, which required training. Apart from the training areas the participants were also required to suggest the level, content, duration, medium and the timing for conducting these trainings. **(Presentations enclosed as annexure XI)** The main issues that were discussed during the presentations made by the groups are as under:

- It was felt by the participants that information about the legal aspects were required in some trainings. This was especially the case for trainings on livelihoods based on MFPS. Thus, it was felt that apart from general dissemination of information and technology, trainings should involve information on important related aspects such as rules and regulations, marketing channels etc.
- The group further suggested that trainings could be modeled to develop trainers who can be instrumental in further dissemination of information in the operational areas. This would reduce the time required for dissemination of information. Thus, trainings should also involve a component, which capacitates participants on imparting trainings in their operational areas.
- It was observed that benefits from trainings planned under the PACS program are restricted to the PACS project team. This limits the learning at the organisational level. It was thus suggested that the organisations may be independent to nominate participants for trainings irrespective of his association with the PACS program.
- One time /orientation trainings on certain issues, such as organisational development or on human resource development issues, may not be adequate. It was felt that on some issues a series of trainings might be required to develop a certain level of understanding among the participants.
- It was suggested that the medium of training may be Hindi for lower and middle level workers for better understanding. The medium may be switched to English for trainings of higher functionaries of NGOs.

The participants were informed about three major decisions reached for future trainings. They are as under:

- Organisations would be given complete independence to decide its representatives as trainees for trainings. This could be irrespective of his association to the PACS program.
- It would not be necessary for organisations to participate in all trainings planned. They were given the independence to choose the trainings that would like to participate.
- It was also suggested that the large pool of resource within the group could be utilised for training on various issues. It was suggested that organisations would be encouraged to conduct trainings in areas of their expertise.

Session II: Feedback on the workshop

Feedback for the workshop was planned through an informal activity and a formal discussion by the participants. The informal session facilitated by Dr. Anwar Jafri (SSRO) was a dramatized reflection of the past three days. It touched upon the methodology and the issues covered during the workshop.

The major issues/suggestions that came out during the formal feedback sessions are as under:

- It was suggested that peer review could be conducted in phases. This would allow partners to analyse and understand issues more comprehensively. This would also increase the sharing and understanding of each other's work.

- It was also felt that in some cases the peer review visits were conducted in haste. It was suggested that they be planned for a longer duration so as to increase the scope of sharing with them.
- It was suggested that peer review visits should be conducted by senior functionaries of partner CSOs so as to benefit from their experience and foresight.
- It was suggested that the peer review may be modified such as to initiate it different levels. For example peer review could be designed for partners at the organisational level, for the capacity of field staff, program level etc.
- It was suggested that a calendar of peer review visits may be developed. Care should be taken to schedule larger teams for the network projects so as to ensure simultaneous visits in the project areas.
- It was suggested to develop panel nominated by partner organisations to conduct peer review visits based on a framework developed by them. It was suggested that the panel may be oriented to conduct such visits and develop indicators for more analytical review of work.
- It was felt that the reports of the peer review visits should be sent to the partner CSOs before the workshop so as to increase their participation in these workshops.

Session III: Election of the Co-ordination Committee MP and Chhattisgarh

The session was aimed at electing a new coordinating committee of MP and Chhattisgarh and outline its responsibilities for the next six months. After a lot of deliberation it was decided that the coordination committee would comprise of a mix of new and old members. This was to have a mix of experience and new ideas in the committee. Thus, VHAI and ARAMBH joined the coordination committee as their new members along with the already exiting members. It was decided that the old members would make way for new members in the next workshop.

The key responsibilities of the Co-ordination Committee were finalised. They have been listed below:

- It was decided that the coordination committee would evolve the schedule and criterion for future peer review visits.
- They were also given the responsibility to follow-up on the following activities:
 - Workshops planned on thematic areas.
 - Advocacy plan for various networks.
 - Regional coordination
- Preparation and follow up for the next peer review workshop.
- Develop as a link between MC and other CSO partners of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.
- To send a bimonthly report to all the partner CSOs about the decisions and proceedings of the coordination committee.

It was also suggested that the SSRO may be more intensively involved in the operations of the coordination committee.

The group unanimously suggested that the next peer review workshop may be held at Raipur in Chhattisgarh.