

# **Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) Programme**

## **Peer Review Workshop, Bodh Gaya, Bihar**

### **SECTION I**

#### **1.1 Background**

The Poorest Area Civil Society (PACS) Programme, funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) and organized by the Development Alternatives (DA), New Delhi, covers Bihar as one its six target states. In comparison to other states, the Programme had started a little later in Bihar, the first project receiving the approval of DA in August, 2002. However, since then, a number of fresh projects has been sanctioned and at present 7 of them are being implemented by 7 different partnering NGOs. Of these, 5 programmes have been of more than six months' duration, run by the following NGOs – Organisation for Socio-economic and Rural Development (OSERD), Nav Bihar Samaj Kalyan Pratisthan Kendra (NBSKPK), SAPIT (South Asia Partnership India Trust), Gramin Evam Nagar Vikas Parishad (GENVP) and Action Aid India (AAI). By now, after completing their preparatory exercises, all these organisations have moved a few steps in their grassroot level operations and have also gathered preliminary experiences about the challenges that they are likely to face. The DA had, therefore, found it desirable to organise a Peer Review Workshop for these NGOs.

The Workshop was held on July 28-29, 2003 at Bodh Gaya and the responsibility for organising it was entrusted to OSERD. Apart from representatives of those 5 NGOs, the Workshop was also attended by representatives of two NGOs whose proposals have recently been approved or one expected to be approved in near future. It was also attended by Resource Persons from DA and the Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI), Patna, the latter working as the Supportive Supervision Resource Organisation (SSRO) for the PACS Programme in Bihar.

#### **1.2 Objectives of the Workshop**

The Peer Review Workshops are a regular part of the monitoring system of PACS Programme. Planned to be held every six months in each of the states, the objectives of these workshops are:

- (a) to review the progress of the on-going projects during the preceding six months by DA, ADRI and fellow NGOs;
- (b) to discuss the problems faced by NGOs in implementing the PACS Programme and hopefully identify their possible solutions;
- (c) to share the success stories of NGOs for their possible replication elsewhere;
- (d) to identify common issue for state level advocacy; and
- (e) to continuously strengthen the network of partners of PACS Programme in this state.

The present Workshop was the first of its kind in Bihar and, therefore, a part of its deliberations was also designed towards orienting the NGOs about general development objectives of DFID, specific objectives of PACS Programme and the strategy of its implementation.

## SECTION II

### PROCESS DETAILS – DAY 1

The two day long deliberations of the Workshop can be divided into two parts — presentations and reviews. Although some overlapping between the two is but expected, the presentations by the NGOs as well as DA and ADRI had formed the major part of the proceedings on Day 1, and the review and discussions were taken up in Day 2. In remaining part of this Report, these deliberations are reported in a chronological order, but as mentioned before, a thematic order is also quite apparent in this exercise.

#### **2.1 DFID – Role and Expectations**

After a brief welcome address by Mr. Rajesh Dubey of DA and the usual self-introduction by all the participants, the first substantive session of the Workshop was on the ‘Role and Expectations of DFID’, vis-à-vis the PACS Programme in Bihar, conducted by Ms. Kiran Sharma of DA. In her presentation, she had emphasised two aspects of the Programme — one relating to the overall goal and strategy of PACS Programme, and the second concerned with the specific problems of the Programme in Bihar.

#### Overall Goal/ Strategy of PACS Programme

The PACS programme is targeted at 100 most backward districts in India, spread over 6 states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. The basic objective of the Programme is to empower the poor people in these districts to realise more effectively and in a sustainable manner, the following entitlements — (a) civil rights, (b) political rights, (c) economic entitlements, (d) social entitlements and (e) cultural entitlements.

The strategy of the programme envisages five critical thematic areas, interventions along which are expected to help the programme achieve its goals, as mentioned above. These five thematic areas are — (a) Improved local self-governance in rural and urban areas, (b) Women’s empowerment, (c) Social cohesion, (d) Policy advocacy and (e) Self-help to meet poor people’s basic needs. Since ‘empowerment’ is the basic objective of PACS Programme, all these

thematic areas have been so chosen that each of them can be pursued even without the cooperation of the state, although the strategy of ensuring convergence with government programmes will obviously strengthen the interventions).

Since the Programme is strategised to be organized outside the state development administration, it is obviously in need of an alternative institution which could shoulder its agenda. For understandable reasons, the Civil Society Organisations (CSOS) were identified as the partners for organising the Programme and, within this broad category, DFID's targeted partners were — (a) NGO, (b) Cooperative, (c) Academic Institutions, (d) Movements (e.g. of women or dalits) and (e) Trade Unions. However, in case of Bihar, all the partnering institutions so far have been NGOs. The ultimate target for PACS Programme was, of course, the poor people in the most backward districts, with particular focus on women.

Among the specific activities under PACS Programme that are expected to help it achieve its goals are — (a) Training, (b) Advocacy (c) Organisational Development, (d) Exposure Visits, (e) Group Formation, (f) Information Dissemination and (g) Limited Service Delivery. As would be evident later, the Programme in Bihar till date has concentrated mostly on organisational development and group formation; other dimensions are expected to emerge later as the Programme gradually matures.

#### Observation on PACS Programme in Bihar

A more focused presentation on the PACS Programme in Bihar was made by Mr. Rajesh Dubey later, but Ms. Sharma had also shared a few important observations on the programme with the participants in the Workshop. These observations, as listed below, are expected to help the partner NGOs develop a more effective way of implementing the Programme.

1. Under PACS Programme, maximum number of concept papers was received from Bihar, but the quality of these papers were not satisfactory. Some of the NGOs were also not able to demonstrate financial discipline in their past activities. The objective of DFID of strengthening CSOS was, therefore, very relevant for Bihar.

2. The projects are approved after examining both their technical and financial dimensions. These two dimensions will also form parameters for monitoring and evaluating them.
3. The NGOs should be particularly mindful of the financial discipline when they are receiving simultaneous funding and support for projects from other organisations.
4. ADRI has been assigned the role of supportive supervision of PACS Programme in Bihar. Its role will be monitoring and handholding, not policing as feared by some NGOs.
5. In course of the implementation of the Programme, all efforts should be made by the NGOs to share their difficulties with both DA and ADRI, instead of covering them up which would only hamper its progress. Similarly, success stories should also be well documented and shared with others for possible replication.

## **2.2 PACS Programme in Bihar**

As mentioned before, a detailed presentation was made on the progress of PACS Programme in Bihar by Mr. Rajesh Dubey.

To help the participants acquire a deeper understanding of the objectives of the Programme, Mr. Dubey had started with the International Development Goals for 2015, as enunciated by the UN. These goals cover — poverty reduction, primary school enrolment, removing gender disparities in education, reducing infant and maternal mortality, expanding access to health services, ensuring sustainable development and a reversal in the trend of loss of environmental resources. Based on statistical data on the extent of ‘Human Deprivation’, Mr. Dubey also emphasised how challenging were those development goals for India. In the above background, DFID had initially decided to work with only pro-poor state governments; but fearing the exclusion a majority of the poor not having pro-poor governance, DFID had later decided to work in the poorest areas in India, irrespective of the nature of its government. This was indeed the basic rationale of PACS Programme.

As regards the progress of the Programme in Bihar, it was mentioned that DA had received as may as 94 concept papers from Bihar, out of which 73 have been appraised. Of these 73 concept papers, 28 were sanctioned and the concerned NGOs were requested to submit specific

project proposals. Only 15 among them have so far responded and the status of these project proposals is as follows — appraised (10), sanctioned (7), rejected (2), pending (1) and to be appraised (5). A list of these 7 sanctioned project appears as Appendix I.

### **2.3 Strategy of Supportive Supervisions for PACs Programme**

The partnering NGOs for PACS Programme had already been told that, unlike other development programmes, the PACS Programme has adopted a strategy of ‘supportive supervision’ where one particular institution (in the present case, ADRI), apart from monitoring their progress, will provide them with some critical professional support to help them attain the project goals. Dr. Prabhat P Ghosh of ADRI had, therefore, tried to explain to the participants what could be the possible nature of such handholding between ADRI and partner NGOs.

Dr. Ghosh mentioned in the beginning that of the two parts of this exercise — support and supervision — the former was more important. The 5 dimensions that he had identified for rendering needed support were — (1) Human Resource Planning, (2) Capacity Building, (3) Work Plan/ Micro Planning (4) Self-Evaluation/ Organisational Learning and (5) Documentation/ Database/ Information. Elaborating the framework, Dr. Ghosh listed specific supports that may be required under each of the above 5 broad dimensions. For example, under Human Resource Planning, he had listed as many as six issues where support could be required — NGO-level functionaries, grassroot level functionaries, stakeholders, associates/ friends, distribution of responsibilities and proposed incentive structure. For specific issues identified under other 4 dimensions, please see Appendix II.

A similar exercise on supportive supervision was also done in a recent Peer Review Workshop in Maharashtra. The contents of that discussion, as could be gathered from the Power Point slides used there, was also explained by Dr. Ghosh to the participants.

### **2.4 Presentation by AAI**

The AAI has been working as a partner in PACs Programme since January, 2003. The Project is entitled ‘Empowerment of Mushahars in Maharajganj (UP) and East Champaran (Bihar) by Action using Rights Based Approach’. The progress report of AAI under PACS Programme

was presented by Mr. Amar and Mr. Akhil, with Mr. Ganesh Singh and Mr. Brajnasudan Prasad at the Chair.

The project is being implemented in 11 out of 27 blocks of East Champaran covering 7500 Mushahar families in 125 tolas/ villages/ clusters. Although the project is being run for only six months, AAI reported as many as 18 different activities during the period, all aimed at welfare of the Mushahars. Interestingly, 9 of these activities were in the nature of self-help, 5 of them were related to creating pressure for effective implementation of an already existing government programme, 3 of them actually meant obtaining some government benefit and in 1 case it was in the nature of a struggle (i.e., capturing the land of a religions trust). Since AAI reported that in no less than 110 out of 125 villages, ‘Mushahar Vikas Manch’ has already been formed along with the establishment of ‘grain goals’ in each of them, it can probably be maintained that a basic ‘institutional base’ for the implementation of the project has already been created. A number of queries and observation were made by the participants on the presentation by AAI. The salient points emerging from these deliberations are listed below :

1. Mushahars form a rather nomadic community and, therefore, no substantial database exists on their economic, social and political conditions. The AAI has requested District Magistrate (DM) to collect data on their migration pattern. But this is not adequate; AAI, on their own, should make efforts to create a database on Mushahars.
2. AAI had reported that the district administration was quite cooperative in the implementation of their project. Since this happy phenomenon was not experienced by many other NGOs, it led to the discussion ‘under what circumstances the administration cooperates’. From the experience of AAI, it was evident that involving the administration from the very ‘beginning’ of the project, was one of the ways of ensuring its cooperation.
3. AAI had also reported wide participation of Mushahars in its programmes, giving rise to the query — how such participation was possible right from the stage of project’s initiation. This was possible, as Mr. Amar Said, because of a happy coincidence; the scheme of Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) was successfully implemented in the area due to active role of AAI right in the beginning, raising its credibility and thereby enthusing the Mushahars to join AAI’s later efforts. Although it was a coincidence, it underlines the

critical role that ‘immediate benefits’ could play in establishing the legitimacy and credibility of any intervening NGO.

4. For ensuring the continuous progress in the project, it was suggested that AAI may publish a newsletter as well as organise exposure visit of functionaries/ beneficiaries to Maharashtra where dalit movement is rather strong.
5. The Chairperson at the end remarked that Mushahars are traditionally nomads and has a very low social status, but now the situation is changing. The development institutions should now provide them with facilities for education, health and implementation of labour laws (at their workplaces, like in brick kilns).

## **2.5 Presentation by OSERD**

OSERD has been working in Gaya district since August, 2002 for ‘Economic Empowerment of Women’. It is now working in four blocks (Paraiya, Fatehpur, Bodhgaya and Bankebazar) with three partner NGOs — Avidya Vimukti Sansthan (AVS), Prakhand Gram Swaraj Samiti (PGSS) and Prayas. Among the women, OSERD is specially focusing on those from dalit and backward caste households. The presentation was made by Ms. Archana Chaudhury, an experienced functionary of OSERD.

It was quite evident that OSERD has been concentrating on formation of new women self-help groups (SHGs) and strengthening already existing SHGs for achieving its project goals. Apart from meeting with network partners and villagers, it has also conducted training for network partners and SHG leaders. A group of women from these SHGs had also presented a street drama at the Workshop premises to demonstrate their communication skills.

The agenda of these SHGs seemed to have three components — economic independence, health and women’s rights. It would require extensive field visits to know the relative importance of these three components in OSERD’s project, but the oral presentation seemed to indicate that working for economic independence had probably taken most of project time till date. For effective monitoring of the project, project staff of OSERD maintain daily diary and

they also arrange regular monthly meetings at the Panchayat level. Senior project functionaries also regularly visit villages.

Apart from detailing the progress of work and monitoring methods, OSERD had reported three of its important organisational learnings from the project. They relate to the critical importance of — (i) networking with other organisations, (ii) advocacy at the government level and (iii) sharing of best practices. Taken together, it appears that while OSERD's communication with the beneficiaries may be satisfactory, its linkage with other development agencies (either in the government or outside it) needs strengthening.

A discussion had followed the presentation by Ms. A Chaudhury and it highlighted two dimensions of OSERD's work. First, while most other NGOs working on SHGs have restricted its functioning to economic issues only, the groups promoted by OSERD have tried to address many other 'social' concerns (not merely 'group' concerns) like women's rights. Secondly, SHGs promoted by OSERD have also tried to enhance women's decision making power, both at the household and societal level. Indeed, it is because of this new power that even men have joined the women in many villages to promote social development.

The Chairpersons (Mr. Mantosh and Ms. Leena) at the end observed that the progress of the project needs to be fully documented and quantitative data should be collected, wherever necessary. All these would help to sensitise the government authorities about various dimensions of women development.

## **2.6 Presentation by GENVP**

For 'Strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions with Special Emphasis on Gram Sabha', GENVP is working in Nalanda district since January, 2003. Its geographical coverage is rather limited — only 24 panchayats in two blocks of Chandi and Nagarnausa, but thematically it focuses on PRIs which are very likely to emerge as the most important socio-political institution in rural areas.

The project document rightly identifies the major problem areas in PRI and, correspondingly, four project objectives — (i) Making Gram Sabha an important constituent of PRI, (ii) Ensure

participation of women and marginalised communities in PRI and Gram Sabha, (iii) Encourage elected members to identify issues of development, analyse them and solve the problem, and (iv) Minimise corruption in implementation of development schemes at block level. For unexplained reasons, however, GENVP has taken up a number of activities in the recent past which are important but evidently not directly related to project objectives — like formation of SHG or organising health awareness camps. As regards its claim about project output, those related to ‘training of various PRI functionaries’ is substantial, but the claim about wide improvement in the government delivery system (in health, education, poverty alleviation programme, etc.) within such a short period of time may not be free of exaggeration.

Like other NGOs, GENVP also tries to monitor its work through a number of weekly/ fortnightly/ monthly meetings as well as maintenance of daily work report of project functionaries. This feedback system has resulted in the identification of four crucial constraints on project work — (i) internal conflict among PRI members, (ii) bullying by dominant Mukhiyas in training programmes, (iii) mismanagement of SGSY, resulting in loss of faith in SHGs and (iv) lack of vehicle facility. Of these, the first two are more important and GENVP should ‘redesign’ its training programmes to at least partially mitigate this challenge. External trainers might indeed help such redesigning exercise.

In the ensuing discussion, a number of participants had enquired about the social and political profile of PRI functionaries. It is, therefore, necessary that GENVP collects complete data on the social, economic and political background of PRI functionaries which will also help them design better training programmes. Further it was also suggested to the GENVP that — (a) there should be a follow up all training programmes, (b) PRI functionaries should be helped to build pressure groups to change the negative attitude of the bureaucrats towards PRI and (c) women PRI functionaries should receive special attention of GENVP project team.

## **2.6 Presentation by SAPIT**

SAPIT, headquartered in New Delhi, is presently working under PACS Programme in two states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh for ‘Socio-economic Empowerment of Women below Poverty Line’. This project covers 90 villages. The progress of work by SAPIT since the inception of the project in November, 2002 was presented by Mr. Sanjeev K Jha.

Apart from identification of BPL households in 90 villages, the work of SAPIT has progressed on three fronts — first, formation of SHGs; second, promoting literacy centres and health camps; and third, facilitating access to government schemes. In doing all these, SAPIT has been emphasising ‘community action’ as the basic input for project sustainability. The most important achievement of the project so far has been economic benefits through group savings and bank linkage.

As regards selection of villages, it was done in consultation with 4 partnering NGOs of SAPIT at Bihar. As regards identification of BPL families by the government, there are a number of loopholes and mis-judgements. SAPIT has, therefore, evolved his own parameter — all households spending at least 80 percent of their income on food are BPL households (as against the norm of 73 percent fixed by the Planning Commission).

After discussing the details of the project, the participants had offered the following suggestions :

- (a) There should be a comparative study to assess the difference between the BPL household lists, prepared by the government and SAPIT.
- (b) SAPIT should work out a monitoring system for its work programme.
- (c) It may be desirable to narrow down the focus of their work.

## **2.7 Presentation by NBSKPK**

NBSPK has been working in 2 blocks of Nalanda district for ‘Empowerment of Poorest Women through Self-help Group Formation, Policy Advocacy and Income Generation’. Although the project was approved in November, 2002, NBSPK was able to start its actual work in April, 2003. In other words, its progress report related to a rather short period of three months only. (This presentation was actually made in Day 2, but is included here for the sake of thematic closeness).

During this period, NBSPK had trained a number of SHG functionaries who had later helped to form 57 SHGs having 592 members (average strength of the SHGs being, therefore, about 10

members). The NGO had also trained two batches of SHG members, each of 60 women. Some of these SHGs were also helped to establish bank linkages and 18 of them have also taken loans for organising economic activity. The total saving of these SHGs was reported to be Rs. 30,000, implying an average of about Rs. 500 per SHG. For mobilisation of women, the agency had undertaken three important steps — first, organising street plays on issues of health and women’s rights; second, organising mobile health team comprising doctors and nurses; and finally, organising interface among block officials, bankers and NGO functionaries. The most important difficulty faced by NBSPK was the unsuccessful implementation of SGSY by block officials, resulting in loss of faith on the strategy of SHG by the rural women. It appears that since the project is too young, a monitoring system is yet to be evolved by NBSPK. During the discussion, it was suggested that the batch strength of training programmes for SHG members should be 25-30, not 60 as was kept by the agency.

The other NGOs whose projects were approved in recent past — Vikas Vihar (VV) in Saran and Mahila Vikas Samiti (MVS) in Nawada — had also made brief presentation about their progress of work in Day 2. Of these, VV has made some progress, including formation of 55 SHGs in Lahladpur block of Saran district and orientation of PRI members in 5 panchayats. It has also done some environment building activities in the area, apart from selection and training of staff members.

## **2.8 Observations by ADRI on Presentation by NGOs**

This was the first time that two Resource Persons from ADRI had interacted deeply with the NGOs implementing PACS Programme in Bihar. Some common observations by ADRI on the presentation of NGOs regarding their work progress are as follows :

1. NGOs were not provided with a framework for their ‘progress report’; hence, there was a loss of focus. In their eagerness to report ‘substantial’ progress, they had paid less attention to process details and organisational learning.
2. None of the NGOs has conducted a benchmark survey. They should be asked to conduct a survey soon, failing which the summative evaluation of the projects at the end will be a difficult exercise.

3. Many of the statements regarding the achievement of the project till date were not supported by quantitative data. With little effort, such data could be easily generated.
4. All the NGOs had mentioned about their monitoring systems mostly based on regular meetings. Unless the minutes of these meetings are suitably collated to generate an overall 'quarterly monitoring report', it will not be possible to know how effective are these monitoring systems.
5. ADRI did not have any one-to-one meeting with the NGOs as yet (except for brief meeting with OSERD and GENVP). Once such meetings are held, it would probably be possible to make more meaningful and helpful observations on their work programme.

## **2.9 Open Session on Problems of NGOs**

The Progress Reports, presented by various NGOs, were prepared keeping in view their own project proposals. It did not leave adequate space for raising some general issues and problems, faced by the NGOs. This session, conducted by Ms. Kiran Sharma and Mr. P S C Rao, was planned to bring those crucial common issues/ problems to the forefront.

1. As regards the need for setting up a calendar for meetings, it was decided that such a calendar has already been made on the basis of different project intervention periods. On the basis of the calendar, ADRI team would visit NGOs at a mutually convenient time.
2. The reporting mechanism will be such that Quarterly report/ correspondence will be sent through state anchor, Mr. Rajesh Dubey. The reports sent to Management Consultant would be further forwarded to ADRI. Hard copies should be sent in duplicate to DA.
3. For additional support for computers, the partner NGOs should write to DA and their proposal would be duly considered. However, this facility is not available for lead agencies.
4. Both ACTION AID and SAPIT, who are working in two states, would correspond with Bihar state anchors as the majority of their project area falls under Bihar. However, they would be participating in the respective Peer Review Meetings in both Bihar and UP. Similarly, the SSRO would be ADRI for Bihar and the concerned SSRO for UP.

5. State anchor will always be informed about activities, meetings or any correspondence related to SSRO and NGO.
6. NGOs are expected to ensure transparency regarding the human resources management, work distribution, salary, administrative cost and the like.
7. External evaluators of DFID would evaluate the projects periodically, hence NGOs should keep themselves prepared for that. It is better to discuss the difficulties and constraints now, instead of covering up for later stages.
8. Management Consultant's prime responsibility is capacity building of CSOs and this is the rationale for organization of frequent workshops. It is expected that the inputs given to lead agencies should percolate down to the partner agencies.
9. Since training and capacity building is a major component of the project, all NGOs should take proper care while designing training programmes vis-à-vis resource person, training content and training materials in order to ensure success of the project. Follow up of training is equally important. Strategies to use skills of trained persons and channelising them into right direction should also be planned.
10. Communication is an important component of PACS project. Hence, it is important to identify channels of communication and also to sharpen communication and advocacy skills.
11. DA should be informed about other funding sources in the PACS implementing villages, so as to ensure synergy, justified allocation of funds and to avoid duplication of work. Although other issues can be taken in the project villages, it should be avoided in the first year.
12. A prototype for monitoring, evaluation and learning has been developed and will be shared in the workshop to be held in August.
13. It was felt that, in the absence of trained human resources for documentation, some partner NGOs are not able to document their own good work. DA assured to take up the matter and extend possible support.

## SECTION III

### PROCESS DETAILS – DAY 2

The proceedings of Day 2 had started with a recapitulation of the deliberation of Day 1, presented by Mr. Sanjeev K Jha and Mr. Azhar Hussain.

#### **3.1 Contiguity and Synergy among Projects under PACS Programme in Bihar**

The seven projects, sanctioned till date under PACS Programme in Bihar, were formulated by the respective partner NGOs. Even if implemented independently, these projects are very likely to achieve its basic objective of empowering the poor and marginalised; but if contiguities of these projects could be clearly identified and then their workings could be synergised, their positive impacts could certainly be stronger. In this background, the first technical session of Day 2 was devoted to some group works where the participants could closely interact among themselves to identify areas where synergised action was most desirable. Three broad themes chosen for group discussion were — (i) Identification of the Poor, (ii) Rights of Marginalised Communities, and (iii) Access to Government Schemes.

Each group was allotted 45 minutes to discuss the issue, representatives from DA/ PWC facilitating their discussions. Facilitators had also tried to ensure active participation of less vocal group members, particularly women. The salient points emerging from these group discussions are presented below.

#### Group 1/ Identification of the Poor

1. The government criterion for the identification of the poor takes into account economic (i.e. consumption) aspect only. It was strongly felt that this is a rather narrow criterion and more meaningful interventions for the poor could be designed if they could be defined as those deprived of such basic facilities as — food, shelter, health, education and employment.

2. Even if defined in terms of income alone, the group felt that the income norm should be Rs. 40,000 per annum for a family of 5 persons, as against the government norm of Rs. 12,000 per annum. However, when discussed in the plenary session, it was felt that keeping the income norm at too high a level (i.e. Rs. 40,000 per annum) will imply too many households being classified as BPL, making schemes for BPL households rather unmanageable. It was, therefore, felt that the government norms should be revised, but only moderately.
3. Apart from income criterion being too low in government exercises for identification of BPL households, there was also an element of corruption which causes exclusion of deserving BPL households, benefiting not-so-poor ones. Project functionaries should try to remove this corrupt practice, or at least reduce it.

#### Group 2/ Rights of Marginalised Communities

1. As regards rights for the marginalised communities, they should include both economic rights (right to employment, food health, education, etc.) and non-economic rights (legal, social, political, etc.).
2. Caste and religion are often used for identification of marginalised communities in Bihar/ Indian context. Although this approach is generally valid, it should not be overstretched, as some households among the lower castes or religious minorities may be rich, just as others from among the upper castes may be poor.
3. Apart from traditional marginalised communities defined in terms of caste and religion, there are also others like the HYV-infected people or slum dwellers. The rights-approach to the marginalised communities should note that the needs of these communities vary and the intervention strategies for them should also accordingly change.
4. The action plan for helping the marginalised communities should have three layers of intervention strategy — community level, elite level and institutional level, the last named level including both CSO and government organisations. For involvement of both the community and the elite, prospective activists at the local level should be identified and then helped to form a sympathetic group, creating a critical mass to work for the

marginalised. There is also a need to sensitise the CSOs and government officials about the rights of the marginalised communities.

5. Education is at once one of the basic need and right of the marginalised communities. One of the most effective way promoting their rights is to expand education among them through need-based educational modules.

### Group 3/ Access to Government Schemes

1. A number of government schemes are now being implemented for the rural people, including SGSY meant to promote self-employment for them. However, for various reasons, funds for these programmes are often misutilised or they remain unutilized, depriving the poor people.
2. The distortions in the scheme occur for lapses from three quarters — first, the dominance of certain political groups; second, the indifference and corruption of government officials; and finally, the incapacity of the deserving poor to assert their claims to the schemes.
3. To address the above problems, project functionaries under PACS Programme should raise the awareness of the rural poor about the schemes and then create pressure groups to ensure proper implementation of the schemes.
4. A second way of ensuring the success of these government schemes is to ‘understand the bureaucratic system’ and then help to create a collaborative structure between PACS Programme and government officials to implement the schemes for the poor.
5. Efforts should be made to undertake ‘social auditing of the schemes’ at the local level and disseminate information about the success or failure of the schemes.

### **3.2 Identification of the Poor — An Issue of Common Concern**

After the reports of group discussion were presented in the plenary gathering, further discussions were held to identify the issues of common concern for NGOs working under PACS Programme. These issues were :

1.	Right to work for marginalized communities	7.	Rights of marginalised communities
2.	Governance	8.	Homestead land for the poor
3.	Health services	9.	Land redistribution
4.	BPL list revision	10.	Power to PRI
5.	Indira Awas Yojana	11.	Crime
6.	Poverty	12.	Hunger

The above list was an overlapping one; however, on being asked to identify the issue that needs most immediate attention, the consensus was on ‘Survey of BPL Households’. It appears that the absence of such a list has been hampering the work of many of the partner NGOs and hence the consensus had emerged for conducting such surveys in their respective areas.

Apart from identifying the most urgent common issue, the participant had also outlined an Action Plan on this front through discussions. Three obvious dimensions of this Action Plan were — ‘what is to be done’, ‘how it is to be done’ and ‘who will do it’. The broad outlines of this Action Plan are as follows :

#### What is to be done

1. In collaboration with the PRI at block and panchayat level, prepare an accurate data base and also review this database after a year.
2. Ensure adequate coordination between SHGs and PRIs to build pressure groups.
3. Establishment of an information centre.

#### How it is to be done

1. Advocacy at the district level, if necessary, through Public Interest Litigation (PIL).
2. Collect adequate facts and evidences which could help to mobilise public opinion in favour of the planned interventions or social movements.

3. Understand the government norms for identifying BPL households and then modify it, if necessary.
4. Establish the desired information centre.
5. The newsletter published by OSERD may publish the above details.

#### Who will do it

1. A committee was constituted to coordinate the above tasks, comprising the following core members — Shree Ganesh Pd. Singh (ADITHI) (Coordinator)/ Shree Amar (AAI)/ Shree S Pankaj (OSERD)/ Shree Sanjiv K Jha (SAPIT)/ Shree Ramesh (GENVP). However, other participants will be member of the team.

#### Timeframe

1. It was agreed that, for further steps, all NGOs will send a compiled report on household surveys at their respective areas to ADITHI by August 10, 2003.
2. Thereafter, the Coordination Team will meet on August 13, 2003 at ADITHI to prepare a consolidated report.
3. Final deliberations and Action Planning will be done at New Delhi, sometime in late August.

### **3.3 Closing Address**

The concluding address for the Workshop was delivered by Mr. Debashish Bannerjee of PWC wherein he stressed that the success of PACS Programme was greatly dependent on the involvement of its partner NGOs. In contrast to other development interventions, the PACS Programme was not so much an activity-based one; it was the involvement and capacity building of CSOs that formed the essence of the programme. This is indeed the rationale for the PACS Programme to emphasise the strengthening the manpower base of the partner organisations. The Peer Review Workshops are also a part of that strategy where the partners

could interest among themselves to enhance their knowledge and professional capacity and thereby build cohesive CSOs in Bihar.

The next Peer Review Workshop was scheduled six months later in January, 2004 and ADITHI was provisionally entrusted to organise it.

The Workshop ended with a Vote of Thanks by Mr. Ganesh P Singh on behalf of the participants.

### **3.4 Evaluation of Workshop**

A methodical evaluation of a Workshop is generally done on the basis of responses by the participants to a set of evaluatory queries. Unfortunately, such a questionnaire could not be prepared before, but the participants were requested to note their responses to three primary dimensions of the Workshop and then put their suggestions, if any. These three evaluatory questions were — (a) Did you learn anything in the Workshop? (b) Were your expectations met? and (c) Was there any gap in the proceedings? The exact notes of 18 responding participants are noted in Appendix IV, the gist of which is recorded here.

As regards, fresh learning, 17 out of the 18 participants had responded in affirmative, the emphasised points being — details of PACS Programme, clearer idea of what civil society is, details of supportive supervision and learning from the shared experiences of old partners of PACS Programme. Since for a majority of the participants, such a Peer Review Workshop was a novel experience, they might not have had any specific expectations from it; it was, therefore, not surprising for all of them to maintain that their expectations were fulfilled here. To the third query of possible gap in the proceedings, four of them were noted by four different participants — absence of grassroots action, inadequate facilitation in group work, improper time management and non-supply of support materials. That the participants had taken utmost interest in the deliberations of the Workshop was quite apparent from the numerous suggestions that they had offered to improve such Workshop in future. These suggestions were as follows :

- (i) Resource Persons for the Workshop should include government officials (related to PACS Programme) as well as some subject experts.

- (ii) Invitees to the Workshop should also include supervisor-level functionaries of the PACS Projects, not just their Coordinators.
- (iii) Participants should have been supplied with support materials as well as documentation on the proceedings of the Workshop.
- (iv) Workshop should be more action-oriented and, if necessary, include field exposures.
- (v) Group discussions should have been allotted more time and its facilitation by Resource Persons should have been wider.

—X—

## APPENDIX I

### PACS PROGRAMME COVERAGE IN BIHAR

CSO	Project Title	Districts Covered	Start Date
OSERD	Economic Empowerment of Women	Gaya	10.08.2002
Action Aid	A Proposal for Empowerment of Mushahars in Maharajganj, UP and East Champaran, Bihar by Action using the Rights based Approach.	East Champaran	16.01.2003
GENVP	Strengthening the Panchyati Raj Institution with Special Emphasis on Gram Sabha	Nalanda	20.12.2002
NBSKPK	Women's Empowerment for Poorest Women of Civil Society through Self-help Group Formation, Policy Advocacy and Income Generation	Nalanda	18.11.2002
SAPIT	Socio-economic Empowerment of Women below Poverty Line	Nalanda Bhagalpur West Champaran	27.11.2002
Vikas Vihar	Organising Women for Developing the Leadership to Participate in the Local Processes and also Women's Empowerment and Realising the Rights of the Child	Saran	01.04.2003
MVS	Campaign for Poor Eomen's Entitlement & Empowerment in Nawada District	Nawada	01.08.2003

## APPENDIX II

### EVALUATION OF WORKSHOP

Sl. No.	Did you learn anything?	Were your expectations met?	Was there any gap in the proceedings?	Suggestion (if any)
1.	Yes, a lot	Yes, to a large extent	No gap	Bihar Government officials related to programme departments should also attend.
2.	Yes, experience of old PACS Partners on how to achieve aims future	Expectation fulfilled	No	Documentation on the Workshop should be circulated.
3.	We learnt the basic concept of PACS Project. We shared our experience and problems.	Yes	No	N.A
4.	Reporting and work strategy	Yes	No	Involve the subject expert.
5.	Yes, a lot of things, specially about civil society from Dr. P. P. Ghosh	Yes	More grassroots action oriented	Field exposure of Partners is urgent.
6.	Yes, about various programmes, approach methodology etc.	Not fully	—	It should be more action oriented.
7.	Yes, Report Presentation. It will help us in future programmes.	Opportunity for experience sharing	—	—
8.	Mutual sharing of experience was very useful. Though the PACS partners are working on different issues, suggestion put forward by them will help us.	Yes	Well planned	More time for group work and facilitators from PACS team.
9.	Yes very useful. Idea of Supportive Supervision was very good. Dr. P. P. Ghosh provided a lot of useful information about civil society.	Yes, opportunity to meet other PACS partners	Facilitation in the group work was lacking	Snacks with afternoon tea should be served.
10.	—	Yes, expectation fulfilled	No gap	Training of workers
11.	Every one was actively discussing participatory process. Decision were taken by majority.	I learnt maximum	Session timing was not properly maintained	More time for group discussion
12.	Yes	Yes	Time management	—
13.	Close contact with PACS partners, thereby working knowledge developed.	To some extent	No	Mode of working in the programme area should be taught
14.	Experience sharing with people working in indifferent areas and environment.	—	—	—
15.	Difference between Government, and CSO, and concept of PACS Programme.	Capacity building of our CSO	No	No
16.	PACS Programme details – role and responsibility of DA.DFID, PWC and SSRO	Beyond expectation	Support Materials	Support materials should be provided
17.	Plan strategy, Monitoring, Evaluation and Other Programme related information. Experience of other agencies will help us in future.	Yes	No	No
18.	Contact with other PACS Partners	Yes	—	Workers of Supervisor level should also be called.

### APPENDIX III

#### List of Participants for the Peer Review Workshop, 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> July 2003, Bodh Gaya

##### Peer Review Participant's Confirmations

S.NO.	Organisations	Name of Participants
1.	ActionAid India	1. Mr. Sudipta Badpanda 2. Mr. Akhil Mishra 3. Mr. Amar 4. Mr. Azhar Husain 5. Mr. Debashish Mitra 6. Mr. Verma 7. Ms. Chandrika Yadav
2.	South Asia Partnership India Trust	1. Dr. K.M Bhatnagar 2. Mr. Sanjeev Kr. Jha 3. Md. Hasim 4. Mr. Bashishta Kr. Singh 5. Sri Kundan Kumar 6. Mr. Krishna Deo Singh
3.	GENVP	1. Ram Kishor Pd. Singh 2. Mr. Amitabh Bhusan
4	NBSKPK	1. Mr. Brajnandan Prasad 2. Mr. Subhash
5.	Vikas Vihar	1. Mr. Harendra Kr. Singh
6.	OSERD	1. Ms. Archana Choudhary 2. Mr. Virendra Kr. Sinha 3. Mr. Sanjay Kumar 4. Mr. Radhey Shyam Priyadarshi 5. Mr. Baleshwar

## APPENDIX IV

### Peer Review Workshop – BIHAR

<b>Duration</b>	:	28th-29th July, 2003
<b>Venue</b>	:	Bodh Gaya
<b>No.of Project Partners</b>	:	6
<b>Coordinating Agency</b>	:	OSERD, Patna

#### Agenda:

0900	0910	Registration
0910	0920	Introduction and welcome – Management Consultants
0920	09 45	Purpose of the Review meeting – ADRI, Patna
0945	10 15	
1015	10 30	Tea Break
1030	1200	Review of the projects (3) implemented by the CSO (preferably projects completed by 6 months duration) OSERD, AAI and SAPIT/ GENVP
1200	1300	Open discussion – Problems/Questions/solutions
1300	1400	Lunch
1400	1700	Contiguity and synergy of PACS projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sharing of information</li><li>• Interaction at local levels</li><li>• Frequency of meetings</li></ul>
1700	2000	Cultural programme

#### Day 2

0900	1000	Session on a topic of common interest: from the participants
1000	1300	Planning for convergence with Government programmes (Who knows who, Government programmes in the area, date, venue, meeting ( Tea break in between the session)
1300	1400	Lunch
1400	1500	Open session on issues the partners are facing (Common Issues/Programmes) – MC and ADRI
1500	1530	Tea Break
1530	1630	Planning the next review meet
1630	1645	Closing