

INVESTING IN WOMEN POLITICAL MANAGERS: UPA CHAIRPERSON'S CALL FOR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

November 2004

Investing in capacity building of women for public positions is a crucial input for National level Development Programming. Harmonizing the economic reform process with pro-poor development policies would require expediency, knowledge and perspectives of political managers, given the challenges facing India. Working towards this process, a gender-training program entitled '**Enhancing Women's Leadership Capacities through Gender Training**' was organized by ICPRD for **State level Presidents and office bearers of the All India Mahila Congress (the Women's Wing of the Congress (I) party: 50 NOs)** at Andhra Pradesh Bhavan, New Delhi, 22nd – 24th November 2004.

The training workshop was in keeping with **the secular and pro-poor values**, of the Congress Party along with its belief that "**an awareness of gender issues**" was critical for political leaders to be more effective and development oriented. **The Congress Party President, Madam Sonia Gandhi, approved "the Gender Module"** prepared by ICPRD. The All India Mahila Congress requested ICPRD to undertake the Gender training in close coordination with them. The Honourable Madam Sonia Gandhi had also met with workshop delegates.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **UPA Chairperson Call: Investing in Women Political Managers.**
- **Engaging the Ministry of Finance before the Gender Budget.**
- **Engendering Governance in SAARC: Hon. Home Minister Inaugurates.**
- **Young Men as Partners in Combating Gender Violence**
- **Exposure visit of MPs to Development Projects**
- **Farmers Suicide victims at Planning Commission.**
- **Tsunami: Equity and Access concerns in Reintegration of Tsunami Victims.**
- **Maximizing Development by Minimizing Denial: DevelopmentSecurity**
- **Pro-Poor & Micro-finance Advocacy**
- **ABOUT US.**

The Hon. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh while congratulating the unique effort also termed the gender module "a significant step in spreading gender awareness among functionaries and activists of the party which was a pre-requisite for balanced development".

The two hundred page gender module entitled '**Gender Training for Empowering Women Activists / Functionaries**' covered the following issues and was sent as a preliminary step for Approval (See inbox).

GENDERMODULE

- **Working on Gender Issues: Sharing of Experience**
- **Basic Gender Concepts: Gender Construction and Diagnosis; Gender Stereotypes**
- **Status of Women: Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile**
- **Gender and Development**
- **Gender Planning: Integrating Gender Consideration into the Project Cycle**
- **Policies and Programmes for the Advancement of Women**
- **Legal Literacy for Women**
- **Gender and Violence: Locus, Manifestation and Strategies**
- **Prevention of Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment at Work Place**
- **Developing Leadership and Political Empowerment of Women.**

Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD while introducing the background/theme and framework of the training programme, informed the participants that the efforts of civil society organizations were recognized by the UPA chairperson. This led to the establishment of a pro-active National Advisory Council to advise and strengthen the governance system. **Her recent call to build a strong cadre at grassroot levels, in order to build social movements, is a major impetus for a civil society agency such as ICPRD to undertake this activity.**

Dr. Azad stressed that the training programme would enable and strengthen the AIMC office bearers to understand the needs and/or skills required to begin such processes at the grassroot level.

The workshop was a pioneering effort due to the synergy between a non-government organisation working for and with development issues and the women's wing of a political party. This linkage proved fruitful for both parties



Hon. Madam Sonia Gandhiji with Dr. Nandini Azad and Dr. Rita Bahuguna Joshi, AIMC President with delegates of the Gender Training Workshop -November, 2004

since the learning experience was mutual. It spearheaded the desire to carry such efforts to other parts of the country and to take gender sensitisation to all tiers of governance.

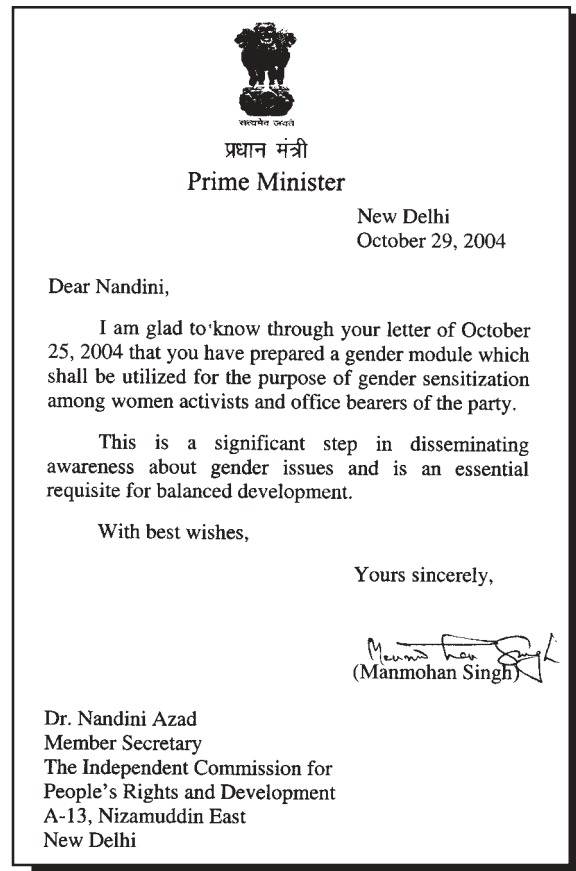
ICPRD IN EACH STATE!

Dr. Rita Bahuguna AIMC President called the workshop a very successful innovative interface. She said that the participants should endeavour to utilise all lessons learnt in their work. She also said that similar state level workshops would be held and stated – “We wish there was an ICPRD in each state to work with us.”

ENGENDERING BUDGETS: ENGAGING THE FINANCE MINISTRY IN A DIALOGUE

February 2005

A group of eminent gender experts and development practitioners, led by Dr. Nandini Azad (Chairperson ICPRD) as part of dialogue with Government on Gender budgeting issues on the eve of the budget, met with the Hon. Finance Minister, Secretary and Officer on Special Duty, Department of Expenditure, the Comptroller General of Accounts, CEO Dr. Lahiri, Joint Comptroller General of Accounts at a meeting held on 18.2.2005 at North Block, MOF, New Delhi. The group congratulated the Hon. Finance Minister and was grateful for the Report of the Expert Group report on Classification of Government Transactions (part- II on Gender budgeting). The group said that they were encouraged by the decision to include several mainstream ministries in the “18 Ministry classification”, such as Law and Justice, Urban Employment, Science and Technology, which are non-traditional and non-gender stereotyped. The critical issue that the group raised was that ‘gender budgeting’ was not an analysis of “women in the budget” but vis-a- vis men. Gender analysis required comparable disaggregated data and not merely data on women. Gender Budgeting as a tool in the final analysis ensures gender mainstreaming and increase in productivity. Other concerning issues related to investing in women as part of the economic reform process such as:



Dear Nandini,

I am glad to know through your letter of October 25, 2004 that you have prepared a gender module which shall be utilized for the purpose of gender sensitization among women activists and office bearers of the party.

This is a significant step in disseminating awareness about gender issues and is an essential requisite for balanced development.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Manmohan Singh
(Manmohan Singh)

Dr. Nandini Azad
Member Secretary
The Independent Commission for
People's Rights and Development
A-13, Nizamuddin East
New Delhi

- Education and Training for women (young women)
- Food for work scheme (attention to female headed households)
- Revisiting Privatization of health care and its impact on women's health, aged and disabled women. (Targeting)

The Hon. F.M noted that women were being addressed through SHGs and that 90 per cent SHGs were women only groups. He also said that a high amount of resources had been deployed for SHGs. A paper on Child budgeting analysis and needs was also handed over to the Hon. F.M. **ICPRD was one of the first groups invited to discuss Gender Budgeting by the Ministry of Finance, GOI.**



The Hon. Finance Minister with Dr. Nandini Azad and the eminent Gender experts in the Ministry of Finance on the eve of the Gender Budget announcement (Feb. 2005)

ENGENDERING GOVERNANCE

POVERTY AND GENDER ISSUES IN THE SAARC REGION: A DIALOGUE AMONG NGOS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS, NEW DELHI, May 2005

While inaugurating the Conference of SAARC Parliamentarians and NGOs, **Shri Shivraj Patil, Honourable Home Minister of India**, highlighted that the conference could help to achieve the following:

- **Understanding the region's aspirations;**
- **Understanding each other's individual problems;**
- **Finding solutions to these challenges on a common basis, wherever possible.**

He stated that SAARC should be strengthened internally along the lines of the European Economic Community and advocated a flow of goods/services within the region.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

- To provide a SAARC forum for Parliamentarians and NGOs working on women to form a partnership for social activism.
- To explore the possibility of mechanisms to institutionalize SAARC Parliamentarians and NGO interaction on women.
- To review the current status of gender and poverty reduction in SAARC regions with relevance to progress, innovation and challenges (economically and politically).

The Honourable Home Minister, Shri Patil then opened the floor for questions and comments. Foreign delegates appreciated this opportunity for an interesting dialogue that followed. Questions considered ranged from the Indian government's measures to fight inflation, ways in which Indo-Bangladesh cooperation could be strengthened, cross border trafficking, and corruption.

Dr. Nighat Agha, M.P and the Pakistani delegate, queried of the Indian government's measures to **control rising prices - "inflation as it is linked to poverty"**. The Minister replied that to more production was required in order to bring down prices. With price reduction, the poor can afford to buy. Furthermore, the government tries to ensure that hoarding commodities does not occur. Shri Patil exclaimed that this had not been an easy task but the Indian Government has tried to exercise control, including regulation.

Dr. Kaniz Siddiqui, the delegate from Bangladesh, enquired about the manner in which both India and Bangladesh might jointly reduce the inequality in the two countries. The solution given was that commodities, goods and services, and technology should flow freely from one country to another for the benefit of the people. Joint sessions would be required between the two countries in order to decide what could be produced with regard to available resources in the respective



The Hon. Home Minister, Shri Shivraj Patil, Mme Kanti Singh MOS (WCD,) Smt. Mohsina Kidwai, M.P. and Dr. Nandini Azad at the inaugural session of the SAARC Regional Conference of Parliamentarians and Civil Society - May 2005

countries. This would contribute to regional cooperation. Sharing of technology was highlighted as an important regional issue. For this to occur, short and long term measures need to be formulated, he said.

Ms. Rukhsana Zuberi, Senior Senator from Pakistan, enquired about the limited resources available in the region and the manner in which transparency in dealings might be attained? The Minister stated that often there is a lack of transparency and high corruption in both developing and developed countries. He added that with advanced technology and statistical information, transparency can be improved. However, the psychology of man needs to be developed in order to control corruption. Shri Patil added that as people tribal areas have limited demands, corruption does not exist. However, there is a large amount of corruption in urban areas due to the unlimited nature of demands. He emphasized that humanity, values and trust are the solutions to this problem.

Mr. M. S. Akbar, delegate from Dacca, wanted to know about the ways in which the two countries might work together in order to solve the issue of trafficking across borders, particularly in India and Bangladesh. The Minister promised to consider the various common border issues, which requires both India and Bangladesh's attention; trafficking being one of them.



Gender Training / AIMC Workshop -- A View

Mrs. A. K. W. Weeratunga, the Sri Lankan delegate, questioned if skill transfers would help women and if such an effort might be taken across borders. The Minister replied that SAARC is primarily an endeavor to create a SAARC market and a SAARC union of doctors and engineers etc. He stated that just as the exchange of goods and services is important, it is necessary that the region begins exchanging technology. This would not only enhance regional development but also avoid the duplication of efforts.

The Nepalese delegate, **Ms. Renu Rajbensch**, expressed that a contributing factor of poverty is the inequality in control of resources, particularly in the situation of women. The Minister agreed and maintained that gender inequality contributes to poverty in both the developed and developing world within economic and political contexts. Shri Patil stated that gender equality needs to be promoted within areas such as: education - free education for both men and women; property - women should have a share in property and daughters and sons should have equal rights in property (the Minister highlighted the differences between the Muslim Law of Inheritance and the Hindu Law of Succession); and political equality – although the South Asian region has had many women leaders as compared to the rest of the world, the status of South Asian women has not improved adequately. Shri Patil shared with the delegates, the efforts of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, a former Indian Prime Minister, who worked towards achieving women’s equality and was successful in attaining 33% reservation of seats for women at the panchayat level. Unfortunately, this has not been implemented at the level of Parliament due to the opposition from some parties. He claimed that one major reason for this opposition was due to the fear of men in losing 33% of their space in Parliament! He further shared that in India, girls were excelling academically and they were winning gold medals extensively.

The Minister concluded his inaugural speech by stating that social justice must be practiced first at home and then taken to public forums. He hoped that all the delegates would work on implementing political justice within their local communities as this was the easiest form of justice, followed by economic justice, and social justice which, according to the Minister, is the most difficult to put into practice.

COMMONALITIES AMONG THE SAARC COUNTRIES

- Poor GDI and HDI indices
- Large populations
- Prevalence of gender discrimination
- Patriarchy
- Women’s lack of access and control over resources
- Large informal sectors
- Strong need for engendered decision-making.

Earlier welcoming the Honourable dignitaries and delegates, Dr. Nandini Azad (Chairperson ICPRD and India Convener, SPGWG) highlighted the commonalities amongst the various SAARC countries (See Inbox below).

Country experiences in the SAARC in the last decade demonstrate that NGOs and their partnerships with governments are at the forefront of engendering the development process in many developing countries. **The effort to forge Parliamentarian-NGO partnerships is instrumental in expanding the Developmental and good governance effort.**

NGO networks and the women’s movement have made significant advances in civil society functioning processes of civil society and in its interface with public policy. Parliamentarians are significant institutional agents representing the people. They have a vital role to play in safeguarding the interest of the people and promoting their development in discharging their responsibilities. Members of Parliament both enact legislation and hold the executive accountable for its implementation, utilizing information derived from several quarters. It is within this context that the **SAARC Gender and Poverty Working Group** alongwith the India convener, The Independent Commission for People’s Rights and Development (ICPRD), New Delhi, held the above conference **in order to strengthen the partnership and further the cause of poverty reduction in the region. 11 MPs/NGOs from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Bangladesh participated in the event.**

Dr. Azad emphasized ‘**economic regionalism**’, a term discussed in depth during the Bandung conference in her welcome address. Despite its history of powerful women in government, South Asia has a feminised face of poverty with 250 million poor women living in the region. Dr Azad hoped that the presence of Parliamentarians, who were mostly women, would help in creating a better understanding and dealing with the prevailing gender discrimination in the region. She said that current **women decision-makers have a two-fold responsibility**: one as **elected representatives** and the other as **women**. These factors were the main reasons for holding the Conference.

NCMP - UPA CHARTER

Smt. Kanti Singh spoke about the **National Common Minimum Needs Programme** of the UPA government. The **issue of reservation for women at the level of Parliament** was another area that needed state attention. She spoke further about the **Domestic Violence Bill** and highlighted important **provisions in National Policy for the Empowerment of Women**

Smt. Kanti Singh (Honourable Minister of State for Women and Child Development) highlighted that rural women in India have been **empowered in ‘numbers’** through the 33% representation in the PRIs. Achieving

real empowerment is not possible for the State while functioning alone in a democracy. It becomes imperative for a collaboration of **NGOs to work with the government so as to reach the grassroots.**

The Honourable Minister of State for Planning, **Shri Rajasekharanji, M.P.** delivered a special closing address on **Civil Society – Parliamentarians Alliance**. He said that SAARC has its own history and a very active civil society in India. **The Honourable President of India has termed NGOs as ‘Social Transformers’.** He was concerned that people’s values were declining, particularly those of Parliamentarians. The speaker concluded that the region had experienced the tsunami but the situation was now under control. In relation to poverty, he said that we need to be prepared in case of another tsunami...

Ms. Firoza Mehrotra (Deputy regional Programme Director, UNIFEM, South Asia) conducted the session on **Gender Budgeting**. She explained that the unifying objective is to create more transparency, to transform the country’s budget with regard to the prevailing pattern of gender inequality, and to bring together two sets of knowledge that have so far been kept separate – creating an understanding about public money and public services and raising the awareness of the different and unequal life experiences of women and men, and girls and boys.

GENDER BUDGETING

Ms Mehrotra clarified that gender budgeting involves an analysis and construction of general budgets from a gender perspective and a comparative analysis of actual Government expenditure and revenue on women and girls with that of men and boys.

Gender budgeting is a tool for effective policy implementation where allocations can be assessed with policy commitments.

ICPRD was highlighted as the first advocacy group to have a dialogue with the Ministry of Finance, four days before the gender budget was announced in Parliament for an exclusive discussion with the Honourable Finance Minister and his team (17 Feb 2005).

The commonalities and differences that emerged in the South Asian region were within a socioeconomic and cultural context. Dr. Joy Deshmukh Ranadive from the Centre for Women’s Development Studies chaired the session and discussed the challenges. The ensuing recommendations were within the context of media, industry, planning and finance sectors.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“One half of the country i.e. women are excluded due to gender inequities” Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairperson, Planning Commission in his pre dinner Keynote address at a round table on “Economic Reforms with a Human Face” at the Villa Medici, The Taj Man Singh Hotel, on the evening of 8 May 2005.

COMMONALITIES & DIFFERENCES

- The Development Indices i.e. GDI lower than HDI. All South Asian countries, except for Sri Lanka and Maldives, have GDIs of less than 0.500.
- Low representation of women in Parliament
- Feminised Face of Poverty i.e. Of the 320 million poor, 250 million are women.
- Basic types of agricultural economies
- Longer amount of time spent at work by women. The men spent 70% of their time on productive activities and 30% time on reproductive (care) activities while the women spent their time in the ratio of 35:65.
- Expanding population with declining sex ratio The main aspect is the preference for sons in comparison to daughters. This is of concern and requires women to have control over their bodies.
- Approach towards women i.e. treatment of women as ‘commodities’. This approach needs to be changed to a ‘Human Rights Perspective’ - women need services as a matter of right.
- Trafficking of women and girl child was identified as an important area of concern.

Keynote Address

Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairperson, Planning Commission at the above workshop in his keynote address “**Economic Reforms with a Human Face**” said that the state has a very important role to play in the delivery of basic services. It is important to invest money in education and enrollment in primary schools, he stated. The impact of this growth will be seen in ten years when educated people enter the labour force. The state must ensure that:

- Better distributed and inclusive growth takes place;
- Other essentials like water and food etc reach the people



Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission delivering the keynote address at the SAARC Parliamentarians meet, Villa Medici, the Taj and View of SAARC M.Ps

Dr Ahluwalia stressed the role of the state in the current post-reform period. India has state governments and a central government.

Often, the provision of resources is regarded as the responsibility of government. But it needs to be mentioned that some of the states in India are as large as countries and it therefore becomes difficult for central governments to often maintain controls. Subsequently, central government limits its function to the evaluation and provision of financial resources. The main responsibility remains with state governments.

PROFILE OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND NGOS ATTENDING SAARC WORKSHOP

SRI LANKA

Mr. Thalatha Athukorale, Member of Parliament, Sri Lanka, United National party – Ratnapur district; **Ms. Ayndavi Kshanika Wickremesinghe Weeratunge, Chairperson of Agromart Outreach Foundation, Sri Lanka, Minister, Sri Lanka; Ms. Seela Ebert, Executive Director of Agromart Foundation, former member of the first National Police Commission, member, Gender Equity Committee on Commonwealth Education Fund, and member of Women NGOs Forum of Sri Lanka.**

BANGLADESH

Muhammad Sirajul Akbar (M.S.Akbar) Member of Parliament, National Assembly, People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Ex-chairperson of Parliamentary Standing committee; **Dr. Kaniz Siddiqui, Professor in Department of Economics and Task Manager for Gender Budgets, Research Projects** in the North South University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, and a **consultant at the Planning Commission** of Bangladesh, Dhaka.

MALDIVES

Ms Murushida Abdul Mannan is a **social activist** working with FASHAN and has participated in SAARC seminar on evaluation of experiences and performance. **Ms. Mazeena Jameel**, Inter- Parliamentary Relations, People's Majlis Secretariat
Mr. Ahmed Zubair, Inter- Parliamentary Relations, People's Majlis Secretariat Medhuziyaariy Magu

PAKISTAN

Dr. Nighat Agha is the **Senator from PML (Q)** and is part of the **standing committee on culture, sports and tourism and women development and youth affairs; Ms. Rukhsana Zuberi, the Senate of Pakistan**, has been the International Coordinator for Technical purchases for Ministry of Defence Saudi Arabia-GTO; **Dr. Shahida Khan, Medical Doctor and Social activist**, is the **Executive Director of Behbud association of Pakistan**, and Ex Director of Health Information Services, Aurat Information and Publication Service Foundation, Islamabad.

NEPAL

The delegates could not participate in the conference as they were prevented from leaving Nepal airport.

Dr Ahluwalia asserted that the important issue is 'accountability'. The Outcome Monitoring Division, established and headed by Dr. Nandini Azad of the Planning Commission, was one such important measure.

Dr Ahluwalia also spoke about the Panchayati Raj. India has introduced reservation of 33% seats for women at the panchayat level, which means that 10 lakh women have entered grassroot level polities for the first time since 1993. However, he pointed out that it is unfortunate that the 'empowerment' of women has yet not happened to the extent expected. In the current scenario there is a serious concern as to how to "empower panchayats". Women members/heads work on issues such as water, health, and education while the men members work on constructions such as community halls, panchayats ghars etc.

WOMEN EMPOWER PANCHAYATS

Dr. Ahluwalia shared the experience of his colleague, Mani Shankar Aiyar, to illustrate his point. Mr Aiyar was greeted by the husband of the woman sarpanch, who garlanded him and also conducted the discussion. After five years since his last visit to the same village, the husband garlanded him but this time the sarpanch woman did the talking. Dr Ahluwalia explained to the audience that she did not garland Mr Aiyar as it was culturally inappropriate.

Other dignitaries attending the conference were MPs, Smt. Mohsina Kidwai and Km. Nirmala Deshpande, Mr. Jorg Wolff, Resident Representative to India, KAF and Dr. Carola Stein from KAF, Germany (SAARC program).

The two-day **SAARC workshop provided professional inputs to Parliamentarians on current issues regarding poverty, gender and development** within the SAARC region. It also served to establish **alliance building capacities between civil society and Parliamentarians for gender advocacy on critical issues in SAARC countries. Following this, a SAARC Training Workshop on Gender Violence will be held in Jaipur during 24th –28th October for NGOs from SAARC Countries.**

Recommendations

Media

- A more gender sensitive media which gets out of its present state of promoting sensational news at the cost of development-oriented news.
- Emphasis on issues concerning the national level and the SAARC region in comparison to the present emphasis on the western world.
- Exchange & Exposure Programmes among SAARC countries in order to learn innovative approaches and successful projects/ best practices.
- Newsletter (volunteered by ICPRD by the first year)

Industry

- A more gender sensitive private and corporate sector.
- Promotion of products of gender sensitive companies.

Planning

- Organize a SAARC workshop on 'Best Practices' on Gender Budgeting for orienting the government machinery towards the gender issues in budget among Parliamentarians, NGOs and the Civil Society. (India could take the lead)
- Increase the size of the present group and involve men resulting in 'Gender Empowered Men (GEM)'.
 - Formation of a Parliamentarian Committee at SAARC level for handling of issues related to gender and poverty.
 - Women friendly Electoral laws.
 - Education of the women electorate through Women parliamentarians.
 - Strengthening women's human rights by making proper legislative amendments.
 - Strong regional networking and cooperation in order to channel challenges into outputs.
 - Utilizing education as the means for removing gender discrimination.

Finance

- Gender budgeting at the SAARC, National as well as local level in order to ensure proper allocation of resources and to study the impact of government expenditure.
- Emphasis on marketing products made by women's SHGs and markets explored among SAARC countries.
- Engendering the Planning machinery

MEN AS PARTNERS FOR COMBATING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Any form of violence is a manifestation of unequal power relationships. Gender based violence is a specific manifestation of this relationship and stems from a system of inequitable gender relations. The idea of male dominance and subsequent violence against women is a reflection of a continuum of beliefs, which portrays women as subservient to men.

Gender based violence (GBV) has emerged as one of the pressing public health and developmental challenges in India. As per the National Crime Records Bureau (2001), a total of 1,43,795 crimes were reported against women in India. A crime head-wise analysis shows 16075 cases of rape, 14645 of kidnapping and abduction and 6851 dowry deaths. However, there are no concerted, focused and/or strategic initiatives to combat GBV.

- In India more than 3 lakh girls die annually and an estimated one in six female deaths is due to gender discrimination and gross neglect. Every year, 12 million girls are born in India. Of this,



Street Theatre by young Men against Gender Violence in Rajasthan, 2005 August - ICPRD Mass Campaign

25% do not live to the age of 15 (NCERT).

- GBV manifests itself in various guises. The worst form is female foeticide and infanticide, which is a denial of the right to life itself.
- Other manifestations of GBV are reported in newspapers every day and includes rapes, dowry deaths, sexual harassment and domestic violence.
- There are subtler forms of GBV that arise from discrimination in various spheres, which include, but are not restricted to, health and nutrition, education, and employment. These are extremely difficult to measure and report.

ICPRD has initiated for the first time in India an innovative **"Action to Intervention Research Project"** to address and cover young men in 5 districts across Karnataka and Rajasthan. The districts, where the project is being implemented, are in Karnataka - Bangalore (urban), Bangalore (rural) and Bellary, and in Rajasthan, the districts are Jaipur and Kota.

ICPRD's approach was to conduct sustained interventions that aim not only to increase awareness but also attempts to cause behavior change and to reduce gender based violence.

A study of some of the youths with regard to a more gender equitable attitude and positive construction of masculinity, was conducted in States of Rajasthan and Karnataka through In-Depth Interviews.

As part of the Intervention strategy, some of the project activities carried out include: organizing Community meetings/forums for awareness building; and information dissemination among various stakeholders at the local level on GBV using:

Local cultural mediums: Street theatre performances etc were used to create wider awareness on GBV issues. Peer educators and NGO field workers identified appropriate youth organizations to facilitate the development of a street theatre group. Peer educators and youth leaders were part of this also.

Culturally appropriate and gender sensitive posters, handbills and other IEC materials were developed and



Mass Campaign Rally against Gender Violence in Bellary District of Karnataka by women's micro-credit groups, March 2005

disseminated during meetings in order to provide basic information on the issue of violence against women.

IEC materials developed were used for Mass campaigns and were organized in 30 areas / communities in Rajasthan and Karnataka using innovative IEC tools. In some places posters were used to initiate discussions for raising public awareness on GBV, whereas in some places, street plays were used as an IEC methodology. Rallies were also organised in some places using banners and posters to sensitize the community on these issues, followed by discussions on the need for gender equitable norms.

Apart from young men, peer educators and other stakeholders such as teachers, family members of young men, grassroots representative, panchayat leaders were present at the meetings. Around 6000 community people participated in the awareness campaigns.

SPREADING AWARENESS FOR REDUCING GBV

5000 trained "peer educators" will be instrumental in spreading the message for reducing Gender based violence against women in their respective communities. Other stakeholders such as the parents, teachers, sarpanch/ village head, anganwari workers and self help group members will indirectly benefit from the programme

Based on the study findings, a preventive-intervention training package has been developed which will be used for providing training to young men on gender aspects. A GES Scale, Pre and post training will be used for a qualitative study to see changes in the attitude towards women. A State-level advocacy workshop following the package implementation will be organized to share the findings with partner NGOs, civil society bodies, CBOs, PVOs, and policy makers.

DEVELOPMENT ADVOCACY A SCHEME FOR SHARING EXPERIENCES AND EXPOSURE VISIT FOR MPS.

The commitment of political parties/MPS to development

and poverty reduction is part of the manifestoes of all parties. To maintain and to enhance this commitment of political parties and MPs to development and poverty reduction requires wider exposure to opportunities and challenges confronting rural areas in different states, especially the best practices/ innovations by which they address poverty issues.

ICPRD has initiated the scheme in order to facilitate a systematic schedule of **visits by MPS/ Political executives to particularly observe the realities of operation on the ground**. The first such visit is being held between 18th-20th September 2005 to Bangalore, Karnataka.

Rationale

Political activists utilize social issues as a means to acquire votes and to remain in power. However political activists can transform themselves as social activists to aspire towards creating a better life for the vulnerable, rather than merely adapting social activism for political ends. Parliamentarians could use political activism for social reforms, as they have the potential to understand and deal with social change issues. Their responsibility towards their electorates is two fold: one as elected representatives and the other as citizens.

Objectives

- Deepen relationship between poverty reduction / development programs and MPs/ Political executives, and raise their profile with the process, build advocates amongst political executives for poverty reduction measures.
- Gain a better understanding of the development context and needs of the region;
- Become better acquainted with poverty reduction operations in that region and Exchange views on performance of poverty reduction projects and future strategies
- Advocate, make aware and enhance achievements in poverty reduction to opinion makers in respective states.
- Facilitate advocacy for higher investment in poverty reduction/rural agricultural development in general and mobilization of resources in particular.
- Provide direct contact with and information on ground level poverty reduction activities to MPs in the field.
- Broaden MPs undertaking the effectiveness of both.
- Afford insight into the implementation of overall policies and strategies on poverty reduction.

Participation

- Regional visits are being arranged for MPs (members and individuals from their respective parties)
- The group includes upto four all party MPs accompanied by ICPRD.

THE EXPOSURE VISIT

18th September 2005

- Briefing

19th September 2005

- Breakfast meeting – **Raj Bhavan** -Hosted by the Hon'ble Governor, Shri, **T.N. Chaturvedi**
- **National Workshop at Janapada Loka** :ICPRD youth project, **MEN AS Partners National Street theater workshop** (4 states participate, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, A.P).
- **Voices from the Ground: Working Women's Forum's micro finance program. (Bangalore city, Chennapatna branch).**
- **Meeting of Minds: Dinner Roundtable on "Building a network of Parliamentary advocates for Development", Grand Ashoka**

(Public Affairs / Citizens Report Card, Advocacy, Best Practices/Innovations)

20th September 2005

- Breakfast meeting – **The Akshay Patra Foundation** is a trust founded by ISKCON & INFOSYS (Feeding 1,20,000 Govt. School Children with the Midday Meal. **Public/Private Partnership Effort).**
- **Dialogue with National Law School of India**, briefing on new legislation and Rule of Law.
- Luncheon meeting – Hosted by **INFOSYS** (at Bangalore's electronic city) briefing with electronic City representatives & Country video conferencing
- Debriefing and Evaluation

- Participants are expected to have a basic interest, knowledge and experience of poverty reduction and be actively involved in the ongoing parliamentary and national discussion.
- For MPs normally up to five missions would be conducted every year (all party or specific parties).
- Apart from the team, all party M.P.s several eminent public persons, corporate groups, National Institutions, Academicians, Lawyers, former Ambassadors, senior bureaucrats and press will participate in the visit.

Methodology

The team will visit representative examples of project/programme interventions especially best practices/innovative models. Visits to rural /tribal projects will be strongly encouraged. Among projects visited in any one field visit, efforts will made to ensure adequate coverage of the various types of poverty reduction models and to focus on activities that are good examples of these operations in terms of peoples participation execution strategy, impact etc.

FARMERS SUICIDES: SOLUTIONS

"Life drowned the waterless borewells" A Report of Farmers Suicides in Anantpur district of Andhra Pradesh was prepared as part of a continuum of 16-month intervention/advocacy through RDRM, Sthree and other NGO networks working on Drought, trafficking and suicides in Anantpur district. The Report provides an analysis **from the perspective of victim's families** on the process, conditions, factors, variables that led to suicide both substantively and at the human level. The solutions, hostility, remoteness from government packages, humiliation is described through poignant case studies collected at the workshop entitled **"Human Strength, Compassion, Misery: Voices of People Coping with Drought"**. Various strategies especially for effective delivery by mechanisms and **"higher access"** to packages/resources were listed

by the victims' families and NGOs working in the area. The report highlights the critical role of **the self help group** at the village level with potential to run help-lines, provide loans, set up daily ration depots, evolve grain banks, distribute seeds/fertilizers/pesticides, undertake small water resources and building public works - apart from sharing, caring and solidarity to challenge situations such as harassment from moneylenders and so forth. The need to focus on barefoot agriculture extension agents while analyzing the ten year policies that have led to the area regressing from **"drought to desert"** prone as well as the adverse impact of government intervention in the oil seed sector is highlighted in the report (ground nut promotion to palm oil import). **Trafficking of women** in the last 10 years due to these factors has been extremely alarming in the area especially amongst tribals and minorities. In view of the recent rural agriculture oriented budget, the report urges the government to review the suggestions given the approximately **high number of suicides in the last four years in the area. The Reports were handed over to the Hon. Prime Minister, Hon. Minister for Agriculture and Secretary, Agriculture, GOI as advocacy tools to support the plan for Drought.**

Intermediation between the state and the poor: Suicide Victim households at the Planning Commission;

As part of the above report and series on Pro-Poor Advocacy - **Intermediation between the State and the poor**, a consultation meeting **"Farmers Suicides in Anantapur: Voices from the Ground"** was organized on 27th November 2004. The two-hour meeting at the Planning Commission, New Delhi, had 3 members of the Plan Panel present apart from Senior Advisors and officials of the Planning Commission. 11 Suicide victim households, 5 landless labourers households and trafficked women (all direct and indirect victims of continuous drought at Rayalseema region of A.P) and 11 NGO network members of Rayalseema Drought movement (RDM) made presentations on the access



Voices from the Ground : Farmer's Suicide in Anantpur, The preparatory workshop for presentation to the Planning Commission, November - 2004 - with the NGOs / Victim's families from Andhra Pradesh

to packages, loopholes to be plugged, action to be taken to prevent the phenomenon further.

OBJECTIVE OF THE INTERFACE

- To generate opportunities and access for the poor to participate in the planning process with a view to own implementation of policies meant for them.

This was the first activity, which led the Planning Commission to initiate a new series on “Window for Voices”

Advocacy Instruments

The Planning Commission presentation utilized presentation techniques such as Synthesis reports, Power-point presentations, focused human cases, matrix of 16 representatives of farmers/landless labour households. This demonstrated the organizational skills of NGOs in advocacy by welding “distressed individuals” into organized pro-poor advocates on issues such as “suicides”, trafficking etc. The main presentation was in the local language of Telugu. Hindi and English translation was simultaneously being done.

Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD, welcomed the participants and shared ICPRD’s three year intervention in the Rayalseema drought relief movement and its concern for the suicide victims households. **She emphasized the importance of the ‘hearing’ by the members of the apex body of Indian Planning so that the real life experiences of the poor could influence the strategies to be formulated for them.** The Consultation was handed over directly to the Rayalaseema Drought Movement that had organized the Suicide Victim Farmers, potential farmer households, landless labourers, trafficked women from the relevant districts.

The Rayalaseema Drought Movement (RDM) is a group of 17 dedicated NGOs and part of the ICPRD network, hailing from Andhra Pradesh. The ICPRD teams have

visited the area approximately 7 to 8 times in the two to three years initially on the issue of trafficking of women and met victims in person and are familiar with the geography of the area. The RDM network partners drew up a future plan of action and also a memorandum to be submitted to the members of the plan panel.

Sharing of Experiences: Voices from the Ground:

Preliminary Statement

“Small and marginal farmers”, the agricultural labourer or the tenant cultivator, is one who is born in debt, lives in debt and is driven to death by debts. **Suicides by farmers** in Andhra Pradesh and in some other states, and **their influence on state level and national-level political processes**, have attracted three kinds of coverage: expert-led analysis, media-based analysis, and analysis by grassroot-based social activists. The three analyses have often been characterized by varying degrees of emphases either on the larger economic policy environment or the psychosocial environment which led the victims to terminate their lives. Both the expert led analysis and the media-based analysis have **highlighted the need for remedial action** both in the short-term (relief package) and in the long-term (pro-poor policies in agriculture and other development sectors). However, what has been somewhat dormant, if not altogether missing, in both the expert-led and media-based analyses of suicides by farmers, are the **factors that impelled the farmers to resort to suicide and the coping mechanisms varyingly** evolved by the families of the victims belonging to the class of the poorest farmers and the not-so poor farmer. The **social activists** in their analysis of the situation, **have sought to deepen the nature of remedial action** by emphasizing the primacy of the neighbourhood and community action; such primacy is based on the belief

that human lives could have been saved by a sympathetic listener/s, with a few kind words, and by a collective expression of solidarity with the victims.



Case Study of Suicide Victims at Anantpur Workshop

Experiences were shared by Chandrasekhar (a marginal farmer); Anjanamma (a trafficked woman); Parvatamma w/o Sri Narakyanswami); Sri Babngi Narayanappa, brother of Nagappa at the Planning Commission.

Case Study-1

Chandrashekhar – Marginal Farmer:

Drought has been a common phenomenon in our Anantapur district. But the situation has worsened for the last 7 to 10 years due to lack of timely and adequate rainfall. As a result of inadequate rainfall along with the red soil, we cannot cultivate any other crop but groundnut. With no rains for 21 to 25 days continuously, it is only the groundnut crop that can withstand the drought. But for 7-10 years continuously there was no rain for 30-45 days - not even a drop of rain could be seen. The crop dried up. Therefore, we have to purchase seeds, pesticides, fertilizers though we can hardly afford it. Farmers possess minimum land for cultivation and seeing their plight, the bank officials did not hope to get back even the interest and hence did not grant them loans. Marginal farmers then turn to the moneylenders. Though the interest is very high the moneylenders lend loans hoping to get them back. Hoping to raise good crop, we spent a high amount of resources each year but the past expenditure, interest and the new expenditure grew up exorbitantly. Debt amount varied from Rs. 50,000/- to 5 lakh rupees. The cost of education and marriage of the daughters soared, worsening the situation. Hence, most farmer's situation worsened. Seeing this plight the farmers consumed pesticides and honorably committed suicide. Some farmers thought that after drilling the bore wells they could get water/better crop and to be able to repay their loans and also to be able to support the family. But after drilling 300-400 feet they did not obtain water with one failure, they did not stop drilling but continued with some more bore wells (2-4 bore wells). The cost of one bore well was Rs. 20,000/- . This increased their debt.

Case Study –2

Anjanamma: Trafficked Women

Anjanamma is from Nalagulapalli Tanda, N.P. Kunta Mandal – Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh. She was trafficked to a brothel house in Pune. Her husband is an alcoholic and did not send the money he earned to the family. This situation forced her into survival conditions and to seek an alternative livelihood to feed her two children. The innocent village woman was sold into a brothel house of Pune through such processes. Anjanamma faced a lot of harassment, sexual abuses for about three years at the Pune brothel. Finally, when she managed to escape from there, somehow she was able to reach her native village. She was abused, neglected and socially ostracized. The Government has already given a package of 20,000 for such people. When she wanted to take a loan from the Bank she did not get it as there was no surety available for her. Women of this village have only one alternative and that is selling themselves to the brothel to earn their living. For the drought situation, if the Government has announced a package for suicides, then why not for trafficked women so as to put an end to trafficking, as this is also an outcome of drought, she asks?

Case Study – 3

Nagappa's Brother (Shri Bangi Naryanappa): Agricultural Labourer/Suicide Victim Household.

Bangi Narayanappa of Dadireddy Palli village, ODC Mandal is Madiga (SC) by caste and 28 years of age committed suicide on 7th March, 2003. His family size is 4-wife / husband, 2 children-girl aged 6 and boy aged 3). Bangi Narayanappa is a small farmer having 2 and a half acres of land (rainfed) and various problems led him to take loans at the tune of Rs. 50,000/- for high rate of interest i.e., 3 per cent. His efforts in cultivating the land yielded very little fruit (all the time) due to insufficient water. Whatever is harvested would go to the landlords and he finally received very little rewards. This situation gradually pushed him into heavy debts. Attitude of community/development institutions to suicide:

Pre suicide : Heavy debts led him into depression and consumed pesticide & committed suicide. He, however did not share his problems with anybody including his family members.

Post suicide : His sick wife is in her in-laws house along with her two children.

Presently looking at their grave situation REDs, an NGO, is paying Rs. 500/- per month. The sick widow is working as a servant in upper caste houses with great difficulty since she has no option. She gets a meager amount by this. Before crises, the problem could have been projected by the family members or by the community to the government through some source for a little help both in terms of agriculture failure and for his wife's operation.. Loans towards milch animals and sheep could also solve some of the financial problems.

Banks must lend to the farmers without creating many complications / procedures, and in case of non-repayment of loans the reasons for not able to repay the loans should to be assessed and loans rescheduled it was felt. It was said that banks should entrust an expert agriculturist to visit the farmers land and give guidance scientifically accordingly to the analysis of the land for better yields.

The family does not know about the government package. They would be greatly helped if the government gave the widow some work.

After an open discussion, the “**Memorandum**” was handed over to the members of the **Planning Commission. (See Next Page)**

MEMORANDUM

We, the 17 NGOs from the Rayalaseema Drought Movement, the Victim Households present and The Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development (ICPRD), New Delhi, resolve hereby to request the Planning Commission, Government of India after the "Consultation Workshop on Farmers Suicides entitled voices from the ground in Anantapur" held at Vishwa Yuva Kendra (27 / 28th November, 2004), New Delhi to kindly consider the following action points that have derived from our experience leading to the development of the following Plan of Action (to be forwarded duly to concerned Ministries for policy and program formation).

1. Drought has two types of outcomes in this area (a) SUICIDES (b) TRAFFICKING.
As this latter phenomenon is over 9 years, it should be recognized immediately and packages offered for trafficking of women / children due to drought immediately.
2. (a) Farmers suicide packages (b) SHG / micro-finance packages through SIDBI / NABARD (c) Counseling Centers (d) Prevention and Rehabilitation of Trafficked victims with alternative livelihoods for adolescent girls on a urgent basis be set up.
3. The industrial area of Kummaravandla palli with 4,800 minority families and slum areas of Gajjalla Reddy palli and Nizamvali Colony, Kadiri Mandal, Anantapur District should be offered immediately

support especially for Trafficked women and girl child packages. Here hunger deaths are ongoing. The above situation is similar in Rayalaseema region.

4. Last year in the Food and Work Program in A.P. NGOs observed that due to political manipulation in favour of political cadre, the grains have been transferred to Karnataka State irregularly (newspaper reports are available too). The Food for Work program is not mostly implemented during the time of drought or lean season (time of migration). The NGO's representative must be put in Food for Work program and Committees in the Mandal Committee level.
5. Drought based local networks should be given special roles / Secretariats (for e.g. RDM in Anantapur) to take up the following:
 - (a) In each Mandal drought counseling centers as focal points be established.
 - (b) Organization of drought committee / programs and packages routed through drought committee, wherever possible.
 - (c) Organization of Self Help Groups (SHG's) for livelihood through the focal points.
 - (d) Start grain banks thought minimal seed money to SHGs / NGOs / Peoples coalition at village level immediately.

November 2004

TSUNAMI: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

- ❖ Being eye witness to the Tsunami wave in Chennai on 26th December, Dr. Azad, Member Secretary, ICPRD visited field areas in Cuddalore, Pondicherry and Chennai and produced a paper on 31st December 2004 entitled " Peoples Desperation and Government Complacency: Conditions and Relief Operations in Tsunami hit Areas of Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry" submitted to the Hon. UPA Chairperson and Hon. P.M.

The advocacy paper was an immediate field report on the law and order situation, epidemics, and relief operations of NGOs from a development perspective. On 7th January, ICPRD was one of the first NGO networks to call for a review meeting of Tamil Nadu NGOs in Cuddalore to discuss and monitor challenges and in situ analysis of progress of relief work.

A second advocacy paper entitled "**Equity and Access Concerns in Reintegration of Tsunami Victims: Opportunities and Longer term Priorities**" was submitted on January 9th, 2005 to the National Advisory

Council (NAC), which was well received as per their responses from the NAC on the strategies / ground solutions suggested.



A View of Tsunami hit villages in Pondicherry - Public Evidence Gathering - December 30 2004



Hon Shri Jaipal Reddy, Shri Digvijay Singh, Shri Tarlochan Singh & Dr. Nandini Azad at the Inaugural Session of the National Symposium on Development Security - November 2003

DEVELOPMENT SECURITY: CIVIL STRIFE November 2003

The ICPRD organized a two-day symposium on this critical development concept in order to explore the multiple dimensions of what could be called “securitization of development” and “developmentalization of security” on 17th & 18th November 2003 at New Delhi.

As a innovative intervention, ICPRD brought together nationally known police officers, heads and former Directors of security /intelligence, (CBI, IB) and Director General of the NHRC, Key bureaucrats with experience as Heads of Home/Defence Ministries (GOI), Chairperson of the Minorities Commission, eminent intellectuals from the Planning Commission (Member), Media advocates to discuss with rural grassroots development practitioners from Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, W. Bengal, A.P. the ground realities (with reference to drought induced suicides, trafficking of women, bonded child labour, loss of livelihood due to the reform process i.e., Voices from the ground).

Strategies to minimize development denial so as to enhance security were pinpointed vis-à-vis insurgent groups.



Shri M.K. Narayan, Shri N.N. Vohra, Shri Srivastava & Prof. Imtiaz Ahmed at the Development Security Workshop in November 2003

Recommendations

- Energize an inclusive process of development aimed at minimizing instances of “development denial” at village/tribal cluster/slum level upwards through right to information, people’s participation in the planning and implementation, and, social audit of the planned development processes,
- Engage discontented groups in constructive dialogues whereby attitudes and behaviors of existing and would-be perpetrators of violence might be re-shaped,
- Sensitize security agencies to the involvement and consultative use of growing social capital in conflict-prone areas prior to taking recourse to “crushing violence through counter-violence”, and
- Strengthen normative and legal controls on firearms possession to work towards their reduced scale of possession and use.



Prof. Arjun Sen Gupta delivering the Valedictory Address at the National Symposium on Development Security - 2003 November

The role of ‘people oriented’ security and strategies for participation of the poor in vital governance processes to guard their interests was highlighted at the National Consultation. **Livelihood generation for unemployed youth was also a key strategy recommended as an alternative to their being drafted by the extra-constitutional groups.** Shri Jaipal Reddy, M.P and currently Union Minister for I & B provided the keynote address. The Current Advisor to the Prime Minister on Security, Shri M.K. Narayan also made a presentation. Prof. Arjun Sen Gupta, current Chairman of the National Commission on Informal Sector Workers, presided over the valedictory session. The Advocacy Report has been handed over to the Hon. Home Minister, GOI.

PRO-POOR AND MICRO FINANCE ADVOCACY

Towards the above campaigns, the activities undertaken by ICPRD represented by NGOs in 153 districts of India are the following:

- ❖ **ICPRD pioneered the concept of Pro-Poor Advocacy (PPA) training** in India in 1999 focusing on the rights of the poor, especially where the poorest in India live – namely Jharkhand, Bihar, M.P., Orissa,

U.P, Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh etc. The PPA campaign supports the poor and women, to develop capacities and access resources for poverty reduction that are rightfully due to them. The conceptualization of a pro-poor advocacy campaign evolved to provide the poor and their support organizations at the local level especially small towns / tehsils with **550 trainers / advocates which have been trained in PPA & rights training from over 430 NGOs in 55 districts in 5 of the poorest states of India.**

PRO-POOR ADVOCACY

- A holistic perception of development so as to take up local advocacy issues in poverty reduction,
 - To understand and promote alternative micro-level decentralized planning processes,
 - To be equipped with information/techniques in the group mobilization process for demand generation to absorb innovative poverty reduction methodologies
- ❖ **A Regional Workshop on Poverty and Development Issues in 2004 Parliamentary Elections** was jointly organized by The Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development, New Delhi and All India Council for Mass Education and Development (AICMED) in February 2004. Smt. Phulrenu Guha, Chairperson of AICMED and former Chairperson of the Status of Women in India (1975) initiated the workshop. The workshop was held in Kolkata on 1-2 February 2004 in the Seminar Hall of the Academy of Fine Arts. The workshop was attended by participants from different walks of life, of whom three former Vice Chancellors, academics, journalists, leaders of political parties of national level, social scientists, social workers, representatives of NGOs, important Civilians and govt. administrators were present. Representatives of NGOs covered the states of Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Delhi.
 - ❖ **A National Workshop on Decentralization and Participatory Development** was held on May 14, 2005 at the **Rajiv Gandhi Foundation** was co hosted by ICPRD & SAPNA Regional Center, Sri Lanka. Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, MOS (Planning) Shri Rajsekharanji, Dr. Nandini Azad, Dr. Bibek Debroy & Dr. Ponna Wignaraja were in the inaugural session. The workshop was attended by participants from different walks of life. Academics, journalists, leaders of political parties of national level, social scientists, social workers, representatives of NGOs, former important civilians and govt. administrators were present.
 - ❖ Developing Directories of NGOs in the five states of Central India i.e., Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, M.P, West Bengal. Particular focus on quality & type of self help groups for micro finance initiatives undertaken by quantitative / qualitative variables at the block/grassroots levels; and possibilities of social capital that can be generated for new social and civic roles.
 - ❖ At the national level, ICPRD **co-chaired the e-group** setup by the Prime Minister's office on **Poor Women & Micro-finance**. It also submitted a working paper based on responses to the governments' rural micro finance & poverty reduction programs. This was set out in a two day consultation of grassroots' rural micro finance practitioners from ten states of India in New Delhi (March 2002). The report was sent to the Banking Ministry advocating prime focus to unserved tribal / remote areas of Jharkhand, Orissa, M.P., Bihar etc. through specialized interventions and products.
 - ❖ In collaboration with the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) with a view to provide a momentum, to the microfinance movement in remote areas of Jharkhand initiated a project entitled "Capacity Building of Micro credit Programmes in Jharkhand". This aimed to create **social entrepreneurs and microfinance advocates** at the local levels in Deoghar and Dumka districts. ICPRD's ideology focused on the economic empowerment of poor tribal women as key catalysts for developing formal financial institutional mechanisms in remote areas of Jharkhand considered 'high risk' in microfinance parlance (about 800 catalysts have been provided capacity building through innovative MF products). The SIDBI board report of October 2004 commended this as a challenging project and was awarded a **second phase to train 1500 tribal women as social entrepreneurs (2005-2006)**.
 - ❖ A project to train 1500 tribal social entrepreneurs in Jamtara, Godda Districts of Jharkhand (2004-2006) is also underway.
 - ❖ Completed a research intervention on **Poverty Alleviation and Social Capital with UFSIA (2002-2004)**, Belgium and Xavier Institutes, India within the overall strategy of ICPRD towards a process of forming and strengthening "social capital" in support of the processes of poverty reduction as it manifests in its interaction with institutions (parliamentarians, Corporate groups, civil society including NGOs). Also in evolving norms guided by best practices aimed at shaping their quality and quantity of interactions. The study focus was to describe the evolution of women micro finance groups from purely economic units to those that influence social, legal and political facets of the environment. (South India and Jharkhand were analyzed within a comparative framework.) The role of organizations in transforming groups as strengthened entities to challenge gender inequities were also analyzed alongwith the strategies to enhance democratic mainstreaming of poor into institutions, dealt with through good governance processes.

ABOUT US

The Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development, (ICPRD) has evolved since 1997 as a national advocacy coalition (non-profit sector) that aims to strengthen the solidarity and advocacy base of Special and vulnerable constituencies for rights and development during the period of economic reform. The process is towards facilitation of resource transfers in an effort to deepen democracy.

Over 6000 participants from the categories listed below have contributed to the above advocacy and intermediation process through interface & coalescing systems in over 21 states of India. These are:

- ❑ About **880 small rural NGOs from 153 districts across 21 states** of India have been involved in various activities (around 85 activities).
- ❑ **60 Senior State Development Managers** such as Secretaries / Joint Secretaries of Rural Development, Such as Planning Commission (Deputy Chairman / Member Secretaries / Member's), Banking, Small Scale Enterprises Ministry / Depts. of the Government of India, P.M.O. apart from bankers, financial institutions (NABARD, SIDBI, RMK) Statutory bodies Minorities Commission (Chairperson), NHRC (Member); Autonomous bodies such as NLI, NIPCCD, NCERT, BIRD, CAPART, CSWB etc.
- ❑ **50 MPs, legislators etc in India and 8 SAARC / European M.Ps.**
- ❑ 80 Technical experts / Academia, universities
- ❑ 130 members of the National / local media
- ❑ Distinguished Police officers, security personnel, eminent academicians/intellectuals.

Interventions

A range of interventions, have been utilized until now towards the process. These are:

1. Undertaking coalition/alliance building as a strategy for pro poor advocacy and mobilization.

Linking the national/policy level – with grassroots initiatives with a view for the poor to contribute and

participate in decisions that govern their lives (policy changes). (SAARC levels have also been engaged with Network and Coalition building as a service facility for inter mediation of rights / development issues amongst the poor, women, tribals, dalits, minorities etc. or for Human crisis response mechanisms with different stakeholders to influence the process.

2. Exploring NGO - Governance relationships through interface

Organizing roundtables/public hearings as pro-poor watch processes to ensure access transparency/accountability of public policies and programs for the poor, recognized and considered a planning and political necessity. Advocacy and round tables with MPs/MLAs on a variety of issues or with governments – focusing on deepening democracy, ensuring accountability, enhancing the role of civil society in planning governance etc.

3. Identifying, interfacing and training NGOs

at the state level through a consultative process, thus developing district and state level NGO alliances /social capital especially for 'accessing' and generating a demand; and building capacity to monitor poverty programs at village / tehsil / district levels. Training to build advocates and groups in unserved areas to generate a demand for resource transfers in poor communities. (or marginalized constituencies)

4. Development of research/ documentation as an instrument and tool for pro-poor and development advocacy. **Designing training modules and participatory research** through beneficiaries with the support of activist theoreticians.

5. Strategies for reintegration of specific constituencies

such as trafficked women, youth, dalits, tribals (including primitive tribals), bonded child labour, drought affected suicide victims (economic & social). Umbrella federation with over 870 NGOs currently linked to poor and remote locations - identified, interfaced and coalesced (detailed database often available for such groups with ICPRD).

'Developmental security to fight corruption'

Times News Network

New Delhi: To combat communalism and corruption, the governance process should be more in tune with the people's needs and the specific problems faced by the poor in the country.

This was one of the observations made by experts at a symposium on development security, organised by the Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development (ICPRD) on Monday.

Eminent individuals like former MPs, Jaipal Reddy and Kuldip Nayyar, Union minister of state for external affairs, Digvijay Singh, former DGP of Punjab, K P S Gill and former police commissioner of Mumbai, J F Rebeiro participated in the discussion. The essence of the debate, as emphasised upon by the member secretary of ICPRD, Nandini Azad, was how poverty and scarcity of resources give rise to social and economic conflict. Hence the need to promote "developmental security", to ensure the security of people as well as political stability in society.

"The governance process, as we see, continues to be indifferent to the problems faced by the poor in

"We need to change perceptions about internal security denying development"

— Nandini Azad

their daily living. As such denial of development and consequent identity crisis leads to violence in society," said Azad.

But when it boils down to security in the city, Gill expressed the need for well-trained manpower for safeguarding the rights of the common man. "What we need is a better response-mechanism from the police. To that very end, the basic qualification for being a part of the constabulary should be graduation. It is with education that one's horizons expand and one is more sensitive to the needs of the people," he said.

Times of India

'Poor suffering due to civil unrest, communalism'

By Our Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, NOV 27: Activists, policy-makers and non-government organisations came together here today to give the people of the grassroots a chance to be part of the debate on "security". The two-day symposium was organised by the Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development (ICPRD) to evolve a "developmental security" agenda.

The Member Secretary, ICPRD, Nandini Azad, said, "We found that the condition of the poor at the grassroots was worsening due to civil unrest, communalism and ethnic conflict. Poverty and scarcity of resources at the local level leads to intense competition often culminating in social and economic conflict. Assertion of identities often leads to varied types of social and violent conflicts. In this situation, frequent disruptions in economic activity are hurting the poor, widows, and orphans in their attempt to earn their living. At the same time, the governance process continues to be grossly indifferent to the problems faced by the poor in their day-to-day life without any." Drawing a parallel between the rural to metropolitan areas, Azad said the North-East, West Coast of the Country and Strategic States, said, "Like in Bihar, there are two Governments that people have to tough

up merely to bring any law because of hostility for this region. There are about 50 armed rebel groups and every ethnic group has become armed. Rebel groups roam around armed and in their battle flagships. We have to find a solution to the problem."

Pointing out the link between rural-urban drought and death of women and children in Annapurna, Andhra Pradesh, Bhawanji of NIPSS, said, "As a direct result of the trafficking over the past five years, there have been many deaths due to HIV virus. From 2001 to 2002 there have been 292 female suicides and hunger deaths in this region. One of the main impact of the drought that has plagued the Panchayats, were the trafficking of women and children." Reminiscing Kumar of NKPV from Bihar in his paper on "Challenging Nationalism and Global Development work", said the State was facing multiple movement started by oppressed agricultural workers. "His movement has led to a violent counter-movement by landlords of possessing themselves in armed groups like the Hardi Seta. These groups have now been organised. Many caste elites, the middle management today in their own backward areas are now a basis of National identity, but it is such a movement of individuals that to which a society is being torn from inside."

The Hindu

ICPRD NICHE AREAS TO RECAPARE

- Training to build advocates and groups in unserved areas to generate a demand for resource transfers in poor communities, (or marginalized constituencies). Pro- Poor Planning / Gender Training with a practical orientation to mainstream agencies / institutions.
- Umbrella federation with over 870 NGOs currently linked to poor and remote locations - identified, interfaced and coalesced (detailed database often available for such groups with ICPRD).
- Training young men as advocates against Gender violence. (Research/ data base through detailed & latest techniques – action research).
- Network and Coalition building as a service facility for inter mediation of rights/ development issues amongst the poor, women, tribals, dalits, minorities etc. or for Human crisis response mechanisms.
- Advocacy and round tables with MPs/MLAs on a variety of issues or with governments – focusing on deepening democracy, ensuring accountability, enhancing the role of civil society including governance etc.

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