

# *The Independent Commission for People's Rights & Development*

## Special Bulletin

### Building Civil Society Coalitions with Parliamentarians for Poverty Reduction

Issue No. 5

DECEMBER, 2005

#### Building a Network of Parliamentary Advocates for Development

#### MPs' Exposure Visits

#### Rationale

The commitment of political parties and MPs to development and poverty reduction is part of the manifestoes of all parties. To maintain and enhance MPs' commitment on development and poverty reduction issues, ICPRD, as part of its continuing advocacy, as a stratagem, has designed a continuous dialogue between Parliamentarians and civil society agencies, to interact on and with best practices at the field level, through exposure visits.

Political activists could transform themselves as social activists and aspire towards creating a better life for the vulnerable, rather than merely adapt social activism for political ends. The responsibility of Parliamentarians towards their electorates is two-fold: one as elected representatives and the other as citizens.

Seizing the initiative, ICPRD has launched a three-year programme to share and expose all-party MPs to social activism through ground level activities.

The year 2005 saw the launch of this project in September with

- the first MPs' Exposure Visit organized to Bangalore city with 4 MPs from North India. (Sept. 17-20, 2005)
- the second to Jaipur city in November with a total of 5 MPs attending, 3 from South India and 2 from the host state, Rajasthan. (Nov. 10-12, 2005)



MP, Shri Gireesh Sanghi, enacting the differential role of a father to prevent girl child discrimination at ICPRD's Street Theater Workshop, Jaipur, Nov., 2005



"Meeting of Minds", Bangalore. All-party MPs, Shri Tathagata Satpathy, Ch. Lal Singh, Shri Moolchand Meena, and Dr. Nandini Azad, ICPRD, Chairperson, on the podium.

In the Exposure Visits the Members of Parliament had, amongst others, an opportunity to:

- learn and share, salient issues from Governors of the two respective states.
- have an interface with intellectuals, academicians, media activists and industry in the Round Table titled 'Meeting of Minds'
- participate in ICPRD's unique National Street Theatre Workshop for Youth on Gender Violence with young men as partners

Both the Exposure Visits were highly acclaimed by the visiting Members of Parliament as well as other distinguished guests invited for the Round Table.

#### ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- Many Firsts of ICPRD - 2005
- Exposure Visit of MPs - Bangalore, Jaipur
- Meeting of Minds
- National Street Theater Workshop
- What the Media said
- Photo Feature
- ABOUT US

## Many Firsts of ICPRD - 2005

On the threshold of the completion of **ten memorable years of committed endeavours** here at ICPRD, we present to you the last issue of our Newsletter for the year 2005. **2005 was marked by unmitigated success of innovative programmes initiated by ICPRD.** It continued its committed focus in the Central Indian States including tribal areas of Jharkhand and Orissa; ventured into Rajasthan; the more globalised and IT savvy Tamilnadu and Karnataka; and in the country's capital, Delhi, ICPRD's National & SAARC advocacy events remained unique and pioneering.

### Memorable events of this year

#### Building a Network of Parliamentary Advocates for Development – MPs' Exposure Visits

A network of parliamentary advocates for development was sought to be built through exposing Members of Parliament to ground realities across the country. These exposure visits were highly successful and led to an interesting interface between civil society and Parliamentarians. In India, this is the first time that a NGO has taken up such an effort successfully. **ICPRD's tally as of now is 57 MPs in its last several years in its 130 events/activities.**

#### Youth

An innovative project to involve **young men as partners for combating gender based violence** was initiated by ICPRD. The overall objective was to sensitise young men to be agents of social change. National Street Theater Workshops were held where MPs participated in providing solutions to rape, wife beating, alcoholism, along with very poor women and youth in Rajasthan (Kota, Jaipur Rural), Karnataka (Bellary, Chennaptana and Bangalore), Tamilnadu (Coimbatore), the project showed immense signs of community engagement to combat violence which, alongwith alcoholism, challenged food security of low income families. This was preceded by a six-month study on parenting, socialization that led to understanding masculinity and manifestations of violence. This is an innovation, the first time in India.

#### Gender Budgeting

ICPRD was one of the first civil society organisations invited to discuss **Gender Budgeting** by the Ministry of Finance, GOI, with **the Hon. Finance Minister of India** (Feb. 17, 2005).

## SAARC

ICPRD held two successful SAARC Regional Conferences/Training meets on Gender and Poverty issues, the first with SAARC Members of Parliament. **The Hon. Home Minister of India, Shri Shivraj Patil, inaugurated the event.** The Deputy Chairperson of the Planning Commission delivered the key note address, Minister for Women and Child, Minister for Planning also participated as speakers together with two other prominent MPs, Mme. Mohsina Kidwai and Mme. Nirmala Deshpande, who engaged with the **6 SAARC MPs from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives etc.**

### Member-Secretary Privileged

Dr. Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary, ICPRD, was privileged to be invited to set up and **Head, the Outcome Monitoring Division in India's Planning Commission** as a Civil Society leader. She received appreciation by the Hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, with a letter on the impressive work on Outcome Monitoring in Government of India of 65 Ministries/ Depts., (July 1, 2005), which is the first pioneering Report of this kind in Government of India.

### Tsunami : Policy Advocacy

ICPRD was one of the first NGO networks to prepare a study and call for a review meeting of Tamil Nadu NGOs on Tsunami relief in Cuddalore on January 7, 2005 to discuss/monitor challenges and analyse progress of relief work in the aftermath of the December Tsunami. Two advocacy papers were submitted to the National Advisory Council (NAC) on the Tsunami Disaster Management which was well received on the strategies/ ground solutions by the **NAC** and also the **Hon. Prime Minister**. This was after Dr. Azad visited the Tsunami areas around the disaster period, ie, Dec. 28 – 31, 2004, to Cuddalore, Pondicherry and Madras city, particularly the coastal villages for an in-depth eye witness report to the Central Government/Planning Commission.



*NGO participants sloganeering against gender violence at National Street Theatre Workshop, Karnataka, Sept. 19, 2005*



Group photo of MPs' Team, Smt. Kiran Maheshwari, Hon. Governor of Karnataka, Shri. T. N. Chaturvedi, Ch. Lal Singh, Shri Moolchand Meena, Shri Tathagata Satpathy and Dr. Nandini Azad and Staff of ICPRD.



Governor of Rajasthan, Hon. Mme. Pratibha Patil, with ICPRD all-party MPs' team. Seen are Shri Anant Kumar Hegde, Shri Chandrasekhar Reddy and Smt. Jamuna Devi Barupal alongwith Dr. Nandini Azad, ICPRD

### MPs' 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).
- **Voices from the Ground: Working Women's Forum's micro finance program.** (Bangalore city, Chennai 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 1,70,000 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



Delegation of MPs meets Governor Patil Jaipur, 11 November  
Members of Parliament met the Governor, Srimati Pratibha Patil, at the Raj Bhawan on Friday under the

auspices of the Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development.  
The members of the delegation held discussions with the Governor on various social evils prevalent in the state, problems relating to water and power, female literacy and women empowerment. Shri Chandrasekhar Reddy and Shri Gireesh Sanghi from Andhra Pradesh, Anant Hegde from Karnataka, Srimati Jamuna Devi Barupal and Srimati Kiran Maheshwari from Rajasthan were part of the delegation. Dr. Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary of the Commission, apprised the Governor of the activities of ICPRD and informed her that, currently ICPRD is engaged in organizing a street theater in Jaipur for social awakening against various problems.

## ROUND TABLE “MEETING OF MINDS”

At the Round Table “**Meeting of Minds**” organized by ICPRD in Bangalore and Jaipur cities, multi-stakeholders, policy makers had an advocacy dialogue on *Governance, Public affairs, Urban Development and Innovations*, to make accountability an important tool to deal with poverty reduction. In this process, the vital role of the parliamentarians was brought to the fore.

Thus the Roundtable discussions saw a confluence of people representing the Corporate Sector, Government, Media and NGOs advocating various shades of opinions in terms of providing professional inputs on development issues, poverty reduction and the importance of good governance.

### OBJECTIVES OF ROUND TABLE

- Providing an opportunity to NGOs and parliamentarians to form a partnership for social activism especially in the field of poverty reduction
- Exploring the possibility of developing mechanisms to institutionalize parliamentarians-NGOs interaction with the poor
- Reviewing the current status of development with relevance to progress, innovation, outcomes and challenges (economically and politically)



Dr. Azad at the “Meeting of Minds”, Bangalore, September 19, 2005, welcoming participants. Seen are Hon. MPs, Smt. Kiran Maheshwari, and Shri Hanumanthappa, INC

### MPs’ Exposure Visit I

#### Round Table “Meeting of Minds” at Bangalore City – September 19, 2005, Hotel Ashok Grand.

Welcoming the Hon'ble MPs and dignitaries, **Dr. Nandini Azad** stated: *“this is a unique event wherein citizens associated with civil society alongwith parliamentarians committed to ushering in social change have coalesced on a common but powerful platform.”*

## ICPRD ADVOCACY WITH MPS

Dr. Azad shared with the roundtable that for two days the MPs had been with them to observe and understand the activities of ICPRD, which has organized over 130 events all over the country working in 21 states along with 57 MPs from all over the country. One of the beliefs that ICPRD carries is that political decisions needed to be influenced and advocated through best practices. In this exposure visit, the MPs from North were exposed to the kind of activities the civil society is engaged in for bringing about change in society. Moreover, In November, MPs from the South would also be taken to the North of India for a similar experience. She urged that the speakers for the evening should highlight issues relevant to the role of governance in enhancing development or issues they wished the MPs to take notice of and support in Parliament.

The select round table highlighted best practices available in Karnataka in terms of innovative advocacy at city levels. The main debate emerged around “IT taking over governance or Governance supporting IT initiatives.”

**Mr. Alan Nazareth, (former Ambassador) and currently in Sarvodaya International Trust**, the first speaker of the day, congratulated Dr. Azad for initiating a caucus for development issues in the parliament and shared that it revived memories of the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhiji. He urged that every Member of Parliament should have development as a top priority on his/her agenda as **“India seems to be shining only in the cities and there has been little development in the rural areas.”**

### EDUCATE A WOMAN TO EDUCATE A FAMILY!

Mr. Nazareth quoted Mahatma Gandhi; *“the heart of India is in rural areas and hence development should be mass based”*. He also said that women’s participation in development is an important factor, and at the same time obtaining 33% reservation of women in the parliament is so difficult even after 58 years of independence. He continued saying that today the focus should be on rural India and within that, the emphasis on the education for women. “It is time we started realizing the importance of villages and the participation of women in development”, he said. Quoting Mahatma Gandhi once again he said, **“If you educate a woman you educate a family.”**

He concluded by saying that India has formed a niche for itself in the world of software, yet a large number of people have no technical orientation in India, a large pool of illiterates remain, as well. He urged that education must be given top priority if development has to progress in the right direction.

**Mr. Samuel Paul, Chairman, Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore** thanked ICPRD for providing a platform for exchanging ideas on best practices and observed that there is a gap even amongst the bureaucrats in India. The recent seminar on, “Who will bell the cat” with reference to corruption in Karnataka, was one such

interface to bridge the gap, organized by the Public Affairs Center. He further emphasized that as programmes are delivered, it is very important to seek feedback from the participants. **MPs should thus speak less and listen to people's responses in order to convert words into action.**

### CITIZEN'S CHARTER

Mr. Samuel Paul began by stating that in India, development is top-down where the funds flow from the Parliament and Judiciary. He said that the people at the grass roots are not aware of their own rights and therefore see no remedies. He added that if people are made aware of their rights, be it with regard to electricity, water, food and other things, they can demand for accountability. For e.g., people are not aware that they are entitled to get 5 kgs of rice but get only 3 kgs. He referred to the "Citizen's Charter" and said that it does not seem properly addressed. Hence it is important to create awareness.

Civil society organizations should play a vital role in the electoral process. By making people aware of the quality of various programmes being delivered, it could perhaps be ensured that the right person is elected.

He also said that by setting into motion good practices, a large number of people should be encouraged to cast votes, which would, in turn, build a momentum for development, pioneering advocacy on two sides!

**Mr. Clifton De Souza from Alternative Law Forum** stated that development only concentrated in cities and participation of citizens is minimal. He said that Bangalore Development Authority is in the process of planning the Comprehensive Development Programme (CDP), to provide the vision, infrastructure, economic growth, building by-laws, land use regulations, zone regulations and area wise development plans. Nonetheless, it is regrettable that nowhere any mention of the word **slum** has been made where 30% of people from Bangalore live.

He added that the CDP document refers to the slums as "**shadow areas**" i.e. an area where there are no basic amenities and facilities. The CDP concentrates only on the IT sector in the city, which is placed pivotally as a future vision for Bangalore. In recent times, the IT sector has raised a hue and cry regarding the lack of infrastructure in the city.

### SWACCHA BANGALORE!

The *Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF)*, which was established as part of the "Swaccha Bangalore", an initiative in the area of *Solid Waste Management (SWM)* plan, has IT honchos heading the Committee. Over 10,000 "pourakarmikas" sweep the streets but are not included in the "Swaccha Bangalore" project. They earn a meager salary of Rs. 1000-1500. They are not assured of any guaranteed wages; have no job security and thus continue to work and live in appalling conditions.

**Mr. De Souza** said that IT by itself cannot represent the city since its concerns would be narrow, confined to itself. He pointed that any future vision of Bangalore must cater to the needs of all citizens especially the vulnerable slum dwellers. His concluding message was: "*If any plans are to be made then let fair policies be evolved for slum dwellers*".

**Mr. Narendra Pani, Senior Editor, Economic Times**, emphasized that "we are in a serious dilemma today, which is an intellectual one." Infrastructure is collapsing - years of neglect has created this situation.

### INTELLECTUAL DILEMMA

Citing an example Mr. Pani said that the IT groups have planned with a shortsighted vision and not on a long-term basis. He said that with regard to infrastructure people only think of constructing one or two roads or highways. The BATF (Bangalore Agenda Task Force) should have actually planned more than two roads for Bangalore. A high amount of funds are spent on these projects but in vain.

He further said that today, just with a few showers of rain, Bangalore is flooded. The Government is willing to allocate 350 crores of rupees to build an airport, siphoning capital money from education. Though airports are important, education is also equally important. In the absence of funds, educational institutions end up raising money for their survival. He said that in 1983-84, when Texas Instrument reached Bangalore, there was no infrastructure here. The company had to build physical infrastructure in order to send products back to the US. He added that the building six roads today is not going to solve all development problems. The real problem is education; places where there are no educational institutions or lack of engineers. An important activity is the outsource of work and hence there is no private accountability in Bangalore. He endorsed the request of Mr. Nazareth that **one should not reduce development efforts for the sake of mega projects**. He concluded saying that if the IT industry had concentrated on reducing travel time by building infrastructure in time, it would have supported development in the country.

**Prof. Vijay Kumar from the National Law School** highlighted that **development implies giving power to the people**. He said that the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment needs to be enacted and people should be trained within the framework of the two Articles viz, 243zd and 243ze. He spoke about the District and Metropolitan Plan Committees. He added that there is a divide between rural and urban societies: "we need to address it and not ignore it." He mentioned the **Lokpal Initiatives** where seven different attempts were made by the Parliament in vain. He hoped perhaps that once the process is initiated, corruption will be curbed and perhaps administration will be streamlined. He said that precious time has been lost in examining whether the Hon. Prime Minister should be a part of this group or not. As far as the administrative procedures are concerned, people's

audit must be done, he emphasized and concluded quoting Mark Twain: "We have too many laws but there is no beginning to implement these laws".

**Mr. Rajiv Gowda from Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore**, highlighted the role of the corporate sector in development. According to him, several state Governments are literally bankrupt and funds are being sought from the World Bank for future developments when funds are available with the private sector. Citing an example he said, that if an airport is really required in urban areas, connecting it to development initiatives in rural areas is critical. He questioned why BPOs have to be located only in Bangalore and not in other parts of Karnataka, such as Mulbagal or any other place, where the cost would be reduced by half.

#### CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Mr. Rajiv Gowda, IIM**, said that the Government's idea of an economic zone is fixed and to this extent a framework should be developed. He said that planning for **major private sector initiatives to be relocated to smaller towns** is essential. He said that there have been important innovations in India, such as the Jaipur foot, which could be converted into an important activity for India. He then opined that micro credit programmes have become a success but what are the future steps? He said that there must be some way of networking small micro credit groups to harness and access institutional credit systems.

He then moved on to note that while campaigns for the knowledge economy are ongoing, except for some top educational institutions, the education system itself seems hollow today. For e.g. Syndicate nominations have often ruled out eminent educationists to replace them by MPs.

**Mr. Ramdas Kamath from INFOSYS** said that in **order to eradicate poverty in Karnataka, one should focus on education**, a very important variable for development. He said that the IT industry has made excellent contribution by utilizing their skills for the benefit of citizens.

#### BHOOMISCHHEME

Citing examples, **Mr. Ramdas Kamath, INFOSYS**, said that his company has worked closely with the Government of Karnataka in introducing the "*Bhoomi Scheme*" where land related records have been computerized while the other project "*Cauvery*" has made the registration process completely computerized. He said that women's education in rural areas also needs to be addressed which, in turn, will empower them. Skills for livelihood should be imparted for economic independence.

He said that empowerment in rural areas can be created through skill and vocational training institutes where technicians such as electricians, plumbers etc., should be trained. He noted that rural development and education need to be intertwined for better results. He concluded saying that diversification into service sectors for backward agricultural classes could also create employment.

**Mr. Krishna Gowda, MLA, from Vemagal, Bangalore** introduced himself as a representative of rural Karnataka. His constituency has 320 villages and is only 45 minutes far from Bangalore. Yet Bangalore city seems so enmeshed with the IT industry that it seems to have little linkages to the villages. Though this is not mandatory, building linkages with the masses can be effective for development. Bangalore today is like an island, which is surrounded by villages and ways and means to benefit them should be enhanced. Citing an example, he said that Call Centers cater to international clients and could be located outside Bangalore. This would lead to a fifty per cent reduction in the costs. At the same time it can cater to domestic clients and yet develop a company which could cater to international clients. Thus one opportunity can roll out a mechanism for sprouting another.

#### PRIs: ROLE OF NGOs

**Mr. Krishna Gowda, MLA**, opined that the key to improvement lies at the village level and Government has to concentrate on the mechanism of Panchayati Raj Institutions, which hold the key to India's future. He urged that this is where NGOs can play an important role. But people today are skeptical because assets are under-utilized, funds are available, yet there is no major impact. By working closely with the Panchayati Raj Institutions, could not only give a vision but also a positive outlook by removing a negative perception about governance. Thus PRI may be the solution - though not in the manner they are currently functioning.

He spoke about women's self help groups that are engaged in good work in his constituency. But it seemed critical to focus on the manner in which they can strengthen themselves for self-sustenance. Currently, SHGs have become powerful and effective mechanisms with men straying away from responsibilities. For e.g., if one thinks of dairy farming, it is women who are managing this industry very professionally - a thriving enterprise for the rural economy. He concluded saying that PRIs should be strengthened with the help of SHGs and both, NGOs and Government, should work together towards this end.

Dr. Nandini Azad summed up the session by recapping the highlights of the speakers' presentations:

#### A SYNOPSIS OF PRESENTATIONS

- ✓ **A caucus of Parliamentarians and citizens needs to be built for reaching goals.**
- ✓ **Best Practices should be exposed and shared among all, especially MPs.**
- ✓ **Create awareness on how to deploy unutilised capital by introducing a Citizens Report card.**
- ✓ **Encourage citizens as partners in the electoral process.**
- ✓ **The whole idea of IT taking over the city governance should be discouraged.**
- ✓ **Development should not be considered as another mega project.**
- ✓ **Government sits up after 12 years to think about the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment.**
- ✓ **Education system needs to be prioritized in planning.**
- ✓ **Rural sector issues should be topmost on the agenda of administrators.**



*MPs, Shri Moolchand Meena, Ch. Lal Singh, and Dr. Nandini Azad, at the "Meeting of Minds" at Bangalore, Sept. 19, 2005*

#### DELIBERATIONS:

Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD, then invited the visiting MPs to react to the issues and to deliberate on possible solutions.

**Mr. Tathagata Satpathy from Orissa (BJD)** led the discussion and said that the problems that are being discussed at the roundtable are common to different parts of India. India is a relatively young country, which is around 57-58 years old. But emphasized that this country depends on the energy of people from civil societies.

Shri Tathagata Satpathy emphasized that politics is not the infinite. Manifestoes are printed during elections but turn out to be mere printed pamphlets. There is very little interaction between MPs and civil society organizations. India is ruled by bureaucrats, politicians and some MLAs who have very little power; and make

noises at intervals. Citing an example, he said that in the recent shoot out in London, a Brazilian was shot at by the British police by mistake. The first people to admit to it were the Chief of Police and the Prime Minister of Britain. **Can we think of a similar situation in India where the people in power will admit to their mistake?**, he asked. Hence the bureaucracy created by the British is not the same. He felt that the mindset does not seem "development oriented". "Being an MP, on the other hand, is not an easy task as we are under fire by constituents if we do not perform well".

**Ch. Lal Singh from Jammu & Kashmir (INC)**, said that Udhampur district, which he represents, is the largest constituency in India which spans over 12,000 sq. hectares and has several MLA constituencies. He identified himself as a politician from the grass roots level, with the development of 90% of the rural populace of the country as a priority in his mind. People walk 40 km to buy necessary products and if villages are not developed, how can people survive? **He claimed that politicians are like reins and bureaucrats like horses; hence one should learn as to when to use the reins. He said that IAS and IPS officers have put India in the dock since they often plan with little basic or practical knowledge. Sometimes they are placed as returning officers without understanding the electoral process. Hence, MPs, along with concerned citizens should work together to set things right, he felt.**

#### COMPUTERS IN LIEU OF APPLES?

Ch. Singh claimed that today horticulture and agriculture industries have taken a back seat, especially post WTO. Kashmiri apples have been replaced with apples coming from Canada and Australia. He said that agriculture, horticulture industries have been ignored. Concentrating, seems, on developing technology, especially computers, as **it has become a fashion to own a computer.** He said MPs who belong to different political parties have been together for 2 days at this exposure visit, all committed to development and come to learn something from the host State so that it could be introduced in their respective areas. He assured that he would take up the suggestions that have been made and share the same in Parliament.

He urged that MPs should work genuinely and not only be interested in electoral politics but should serve the constituents. Attempts should be made to work with the Opposition parties on development issues, if one wants definite progress in society. There has to be development coordination, for e.g, when roads are laid, immediately, other departments dig it up to lay cables. This should be avoided at all costs. In rural areas we build tube wells, bore wells but unfortunately there is no water. It is important that proper planning should be done to make better use of water. In case there are floods in one area, the water could be channelled to drought hit areas. Ultimately, all regions, from Kashmir

to Kanyakumari, should be connected.

He said that many NGOs are doing excellent work in rural areas, yet when their files are sent for sanction to Government offices due to bureaucracy and red tapism, they often languish. Vigilance is critical, he said, and corruption for such sanctions should be eliminated.

#### **HOLISTIC VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT : EMPHASIS ON RURAL**

**Shri Moolchand Meena, Rajya Sabha Member (INC) from Rajasthan** shared an interesting thought: when India obtained independence, Mahatma Gandhi was asked whether he was happy? Gandhiji replied: 'India is a vast village and only if the village is developed, would there be any use of independence'. He **highlighted the importance of** developing villages holistically, which includes **health and education** and **basic infrastructure**, he felt. The lacunae in each sector should be addressed as a priority and only then could one speak of development. For e.g., with reference to bringing electricity to rural areas where there are no electric poles, or similarly, of schemes regarding water, yet no drinking water, or schools opened in villages with no proper infrastructure, so much so, that there is no chair for the teacher, all these have little relevance. Speaking of women's empowerment, even today, atrocities are perpetrated on them. Analyzing the root cause of all this, was critical. Yet, today, in India, the bureaucracy manages everything; located in big cities and planning with little idea of actual problems. He reiterated that **education is the key to solving problems and women should get the benefit of it.**

His final message was that Mahatma Gandhiji's stress on "Jan Kalyan" should be taken up seriously and politicians should be amenable and answerable to the people.

He also spoke about the **policy of reservations in India**, justifying it as these were the people who did not seem at par with the rest of society. The reservation policy was introduced for affirmative action of this segment of the populace, but instead, it seems to have encouraged "**untouchability**" in many regions of India, he said. Similarly, in spite of several years of independence, empowerment of women seems a struggle today, fighting for eg: on the issue of reservation for women in Parliament.

Next, **Ms. Kiran Maheshwari (MP)** thanked ICPRD for bringing together such a knowledgeable group on a common platform for discussing critical issues. Speaking about elected representatives, she said that a MP gets only a five-year term to serve the people. These five years sometimes seem inadequate to accomplish much. Rectifying our strategies so that things work rapidly, is critical. Often politicians sit in air-conditioned rooms to discuss people's problems

without even understanding or reaching out to the masses.

**Parliamentarians need to create local platforms to discuss development with the grass-root level people.** The irony is that once elected, they often fail to go back to the people who elected them, but may not also constructively make lives of constituents often better. In these 58 years of independence, many elections have come and gone, and politicians could have accomplished much in their five-year tenure, she regretted.

With regards to elections, she said, it should be ensured that all cast their votes for the right people and elect good public representatives. She claimed that one of the main drawbacks is that **people are not aware of their rights** and hence do not question when the opportunities arise. It is unfortunate that politicians can become **rulers** who sit on a throne and fail to use their powers for the welfare of the people.

#### **SHG GROUP AVENGES RAPE VICTIM**

Smt. Maheshwari recalled that in the morning she had an opportunity to visit ICPRD street theatre at *Janapada Loka* alongwith the other MPs. It was a revelation to see the powerful performances played by members of NGOs from Rajasthan, Tamilnadu and Karnataka, she shared. She also shared the incident of a girl being raped by a group of men and how the women, mainly from the SHG groups came together to rescue the girl. It is indeed, an awakening, that women are united to face the challenges.

She commended the passing of the bill on domestic violence against women in parliament with the united consent of all parties. She regretted that the 33% reservation for women continues to be a matter of discussion for a long time in parliament.

Individually, she considered herself fortunate as she felt that, "We learn a lot when we sit in the seat of power". Women have risen to new heights today, she said. In Rajasthan, women sarpanchs continue to cover their heads but do not flinch from performing their duties well. They say, "**Though we continue to be traditional, we have also learnt to fight for our rights by becoming sarpanchs**".

She concluded by saying that behind every successful man there is a woman and vice versa. "Men and women should form two tyres of a vehicle and perform duties together with regard to social development."

**Justice Hanumanthappa, MP** from Karnataka (INC) accentuated the fact that it has taken us 58 years to start using rights which have been included in our Constitution. He said that every individual has a right to live with dignity but in most of the states only a few privileged people enjoy these rights. He said that often NGOs want to do good work and are dedicated. The people in power should recognize it.



## WOMEN AS PARTNERS

Justice Hanumanthappa, while referring to Ms. Maheshwari's quote, commented that it is true. **Both men and women should work to make things happen.** Earlier society was dominated by males, but today by human beings. Women do have rights to demand and politicians owe it to the society to awaken people to their rights. Corporate lawyers who are competent to help them are often not used. Hence Lok Adalats are not used to their fullest extent.

Justice Hanumanthappa added that as the Women's Reservation Bill is in motion in parliament, the Government should be urged to enhance women's entrepreneurship and provide higher loans to women, too. Women should step out of their homes and start enterprises. Economic empowerment is critical, he felt.

Several NGOs have made analyses regarding the role of MPs in Parliament and regret to note that Parliament is often suspended due to the unruly behaviour of parliamentarians. He queried, "Why MPs should continue in office, if they did not perform well for their constituents?"

## Deliberations

### BUREAUCRAT VS POLITICIANS

Mr. Nazareth commented on the fact that **bureaucrats are horses who can neither ride nor know how to.** He said that they did not seem corrupt since they take an oath to the President and Constitution to serve the country sincerely and truthfully. The tragedy is that as a people we have stopped telling the truth. **If one makes a survey in India and asks people whether they have trust in a civil servant or in a politician, the majority of people would promptly opt for the former.** This is the state of affairs in the country today. Statistics also show that politics is criminalized today and there seems little point in blaming bureaucracy alone. A moral revolution should start with us. Prof. Vijay Kumar queried whether politicians could forget party rivalry and unitedly work, rather than just talk about it.

Dr. Azad concluded the session saying that ICPRD was immensely grateful to all for sharing their experiences/work. On a parting note she said: **"Today, there is a new generation in politics. MPs need to be circumspect as several issues are coming up for debate due to information transparency from technological innovations (websites, internet), apart from the Right to Information Act brought up by the UPA Government. Citizens should be able to stand up to politicians and question them about the lack of engagement or accountability, whenever issues arise. Governance is about citizens' involvement, if we believe "Governments are by people."**

## Interface between MPs Team and Civil Society Initiatives – September 20, 2005



MPs' Team at presentation in NLSUI, Sept. 20, 2005. Seen are Shri Vijay Kumar of NLSUI and Dr. Nandini Azad, ICPRD

### National Law School, (NLSUI), Sept. 20, 2005

Dr Vijay Kumar welcomed the all-party MPs' team and introduced NLSUI. Currently offering 60 different programme courses, the concept of the institution is that **Law should be linked to development.** A statutory body in 1988, it became a full-fledged, self-financed university in 1992, with students from all over the country. He then invited the Professors in charge for different centers, such as women and law, environment, Juvenile justice, SCs and STs etc., to give a brief presentation about their center's activities on law and development. Thereafter, an inter-face began.

### Interface Session:

Most of the MPs strongly felt that as, *"their bias colors the judgment they deliver"*, judges should be free from bias before delivering judgments.

**Mr. Moolchand Meena** congratulated the institution for its work and commented that laws are made, yet the most important aspect of its enforcement, and the manner in which one ensures it, is very weak. Corruption by lawmakers and protectors needs curbing. Wrong judgments are often delivered, especially where women are involved. Atrocities are perpetuated and child labor still exists despite a law to ban it being in place. The need of the hour is to prepare the law students in a manner that they abide by the law and protect it.

Commenting on accountability to the citizen, Shri. Meena highlighted the following: The Department of Rural development obtains funds from so many sources, such as Government, World Bank and other agencies but still not enough progress is seen. There are gaps and loopholes in the systems. Even where infrastructure is provided, there is no maintenance, for example, dilapidated school buildings/absence of teachers, etc. Citizens should be made aware of their rights and duties as citizens. They should know that they must protect the common property resources, which are their assets.

## SCs/STs – DIFFERENT NEEDS?

Mr. Meena also raised a question as to why the Minority Commission has both STs and SCs clubbed together. The two are different; STs are economically poor and require strengthening whereas SCs have social stigma as “untouchables” - their problems are different, a reason that resolution of their issues is still pending. Awareness should be created on emanated Human Rights laws which should be enacted and implemented to protect the rights of people, including overseeing that the human rights commission does not violate them by remaining silent or by violating citizens’ rights.

Dividing people on the basis of caste and religion leads to communal disharmony. There should be a law, which **punishes the violators of communal harmony** – It must also be ensured that laws are **enforced and implemented for curbing corruption**, he said.

**Ms. Kiran Maheshwari** thanked NLSUI for the presentations and tasks undertaken for women’s legal rights, apart from training future lawmakers. She considered the counseling clinics and legal literacy of NLSUI useful and invited them to Rajasthan to conduct research and incorporate the findings. For example, Udaipur has several mines and thus related activities are rampant in the area. Recently, the Supreme Court passed a regulation banning mining activity. This has affected certain sections of the society economically without providing any alternatives. She referred to the Centre for environment and law at NLSUI to look into its validity and possible alternatives.

**Mr. Tathagata Satpathy** said that crime is rising very fast nowadays. The judicial and legal systems are not geared to handle and dispose of cases. He cited the example of the Graham Staines murder, in which, though the killer was given life imprisonment, the juvenile case was not handled properly.

He referred to Orissa, which, he said, was a mineral rich state and had 10 % of nation’s fresh water resources and a high forest cover. New industries coming into the state are facing problems with environment laws. According to him, the courts are not equipped to handle these cases.

## LEGAL DILEMMA

Shri Satpathy gave the example of PASCO, a foreign-based Industry, which is setting up its unit in the mining area and coastal region, thus leading to a displacement of farmers, without providing them any alternative source of livelihoods. Special attention should be given to these issues, he said.

He even suggested that a law school should be set up in Orissa for providing training to legal professionals. To this effect Mr. Vijay Kumar replied that in 1977, a Law school was scheduled to open in Bhubaneswar,

but for some reason, this did not happen. However, a senior professor from NLSUI is about to open a law school there along the same lines.

**Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD, invited NLSUI** to Bihar/ Jharkhand, where ICPRD has its field offices. She said that clubbing both SCs and STs together for governance could not resolve the issues. She thanked NLSUI, which is not only of national repute, but also has an international standing, for hosting the important inter-face with the all-party MPs’ team.

## INFOSYS

Mr. Mohandas Pai, Infosys, Bangalore, at their Headquarters, hosted a luncheon meeting and presented the corporate vision, mission and goals of Infosys, including their programmes and achievements. He accompanied the MPs team to the conference room, which was designed by them and had a provision for video conferencing with 40 people at the same time. Mr. Kiran Shah, President of the Electronic city, made a formal presentation on the industries’ business venture and its activities with the government and in the social sector.



*MPs’ tour of Infosys, Bangalore, Sept. 20, 2005*

## Interface Session

- **Mr. Moolchand Meena questioned whether the IT sector is working only in urban areas or whether something is being done also in rural areas.**

Mr. Pai replied that they have started a “**Bhoomi Project**” wherein **land records are being maintained in the software developed** by the company. The village now has a kiosk from which anyone get their “pattas” by paying just Rs. 10/-.

Secondly, a Tele-Medicine program has been initiated wherein there is a tie up with the specialist doctors linked to district hospitals. Through Video conferencing, specialized doctors recommend a line of treatment for cases needing specialized management and care.

Cases of village grievances are now being recorded in the compute database, which have to be addressed and resolved by the authorities.

Infosys believes that people require infrastructure wherever they go as they have aspirations and require a good quality of life. To have an export business **with overseas partners, they require better connectivity by way of airports and roads. In other countries, 135 Kms is covered in one and half hours, whereas in India, it takes three and a half hours to cover the same distance.**

- **Dr. Nandini Azad queried Mr. Pai about the approach of the IT industry, i.e. whether they should focus on governance issues or are they thinking of replacing them with corporate governance!**

Mr. Pai responded by saying that in the past Bangalore was an educated, middle class and a public sector town, with no Industries, but later IT came in, and created its own infrastructure.

For the Government, the **IT sector (Infosys) has developed the fund based-accounting system including the Double entry system.** Infosys is also helping Government to **develop software for accounting property tax** for which around 100 crores were spent. He informed the team that women were also present in the Bangalore Agenda Task Force but due to criticism, they left. Today, this task force does not exist. In the beginning, every quarter, public interface was organized, which has also stopped now. People seem to have been left out of the system due to the disbanding of the mechanism.

- **Mr Meena enquired as to what Infosys is doing for eradicating poverty.**

Ms. Kiran Maheshwari, MP responded that IT is indirectly contributing to the country's economy, as IT professionals earn high salaries and pay income taxes, which is put into the Govt. coffer. The profits accrued through export business also helps in the growth of GDP.

Mr. Pai opined that companies would not come to towns with minimal infrastructure. Dr. Azad added that the Pondicherry - Tamil Nadu - Cudloor stretch having agriculture fields is slowly shrinking; the rural-urban divide is shrinking and medium-sized towns are growing in Tamil Nadu.

IT sector is also working with Govt. on policy matters; working on urban policy, Knowledge commission. It is also helping the Govt. with computerization of Income Tax - a single database for the whole country, Mr Pai stated.

Infosys has also formed a trust for Rural development, which has around 20 crores for helping the poorest of poor - a project called **"hope to millions of people"**.

A Rural Entrepreneurship Development Institute has been set up to provide free training in skill development for 3000 to 4000 rural young people in pump repairing, electric repairing, masonry and embroidery work. People could obtain skills, free of cost and become entrepreneurs.

This model is being replicated in other parts of the country, as well. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan has already begun the process of setting up such institutes in every district of the state. Jaipur, for example, is a city where they are preparing to open a unit.

Mr Pai believes that if the IT industry grows, it would provide employment opportunities, enhancing prosperity. He said that because of the growth of the IT software Industry, Indians are respected all over the world. The impact is so much that Europeans and Americans fear competition, as most of their people would turn to India for jobs.

- **Mr. Satpathy requested Infosys to set up a unit in Bhubaneswar, too.**

#### **21st Century Vision**

Mr. Meena commented that the Hon. Rajiv Gandhi, Late PM's 21<sup>st</sup> century vision was to computerize India, which had been met with much skepticism but now his vision is being realized. To this extent, the other MPs felt that everyone should change with the times and that IT was the need of the hour. They also felt that e-Governance should now become operational in other states and cities, too.

#### **Akshay Patra Foundation: Public Private Partnership**

Mr. Pai, Infosys, spoke of the Akshay Patra programme, through which 1, 70,000 children in and around Bangalore, are fed through mid day meals programme. The MPs' team visited Akshay Patra Foundation in the early hours of the morning, to see the state-of-the-art kitchen and the delivery transfer vehicles for the mid-day meals.

Thereafter, a presentation was made on the Foundation's activities and outreach. A unique example of public-private partnership for ensuring education and development of deprived children was seen. This exemplary programme is also going on in other parts of India, such as Hubli and Mysore districts of Karnataka, Varanasi (U.P.), Pune (Maharashtra), Barah district of Rajasthan through women from self help groups - a model being created for replication.

## MP Exposure Visit II

**Round Table “Meeting of Minds” at Jaipur City (November 11, 2005, Hotel Rajputana Palace Sheratan, Jaipur)**



*MPs, Smt. Jamuna Devi Barupal, Shri Anant Kumar Hegde, Shri Chandrasekhar Reddy, Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD, Smt. Kiran Maheshwari and Shri Gireesh Sanghi, at the “Meeting of Minds” in Jaipur at Rajputana Sheratan, Nov. 11, 2005*

**Welcoming the participants to the Select Round table, Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD,** emphasized that the Roundtable was an advocacy and grassroots effort to provide a platform for civil society / Parliamentarians to interface and seek solutions for pressing challenges without any political overtones. She invited the eminent intellectuals, practitioners and activists, to raise issues relating to water, natural resources, environment, female foeticide, child marriage, de-addiction and other issues of urgent concern, before hearing from the Hon'ble MPs.

### Poverty trends

**Mr. Surjit Singh from the Institute of Development Studies,** provided an overview of the **positive trends in development and poverty issues in Rajasthan.** He said that while Rajasthan is often considered as one of the BIMARU states alongwith MP, UP, and Bihar, but of late, especially in the 90's, the State has performed remarkably well. Changes have taken place in the state's economy – especially poverty reduction as only 14-15% of the rural people are BPL (the way Planning Commission defines it). Yet Rajasthan has its own challenges, he mentioned. It is still largely dependent on agriculture, agrarian economy, with its own constraints to development. The major constraint being **water** as Rajasthan is dependent on other States for its water supply.

Drought has also affected the growth process. Rajasthan, he said, faces severe drought and two years ago, felt the impact of four consecutive years of drought. Yet the state has really come out of the crisis for which it is to be complimented, he felt. There are still serious issues that the state is tackling – reduction of unemployment and reduction of urban / rural poverty.

## Water

Mr. M. Mehta from Jal Bhagirathi, **spoke on the issue of water. He warned of the grave water crisis that Rajasthan in particular, and the country as a whole, was undergoing.**

All development related issues are basically related to water, he felt. Rajasthan has undergone vast improvement in the agriculture sector, yet at what cost?, he queried.

He reinforced his point by saying that Rajasthan has around 10% of the geographical area of the country and 4.5% of the population of the country but available water resources are hardly 1.1%. Agriculture development has taken place mainly because of ground water level development. And in 2001, the state of the ground water level development was hardly 104%. At present it has reached 125%. What is happening?, he asked. Water levels are declining and the quality of the water is deteriorating - the reason why pumping of water requires higher levels of energy. Traditional wells, even for domestic purposes, have become very rare, he stated.

In Rajasthan, the irrigation efficiency, both from surface water and ground water, is little less from the national average, he said. Surface irrigation efficiency is extremely poor. It is hardly 30%. With regard to ground water, it is 60%.

**To quote him: “We are in a great state of crisis..... What I want to convey to MPs is that the basic issue of ground water level legislation has to be done in the country because in the country we are facing acute water crisis and all the ground water has been extracted in major parts of the country.”**

### SOLUTIONS TO WATER CRISIS?

- **Ground water level legislation is needed for the country.**
- **Developing modern technique of irrigation , especially micro-irrigation.**
- **Motivating the public – motivating the farmers for growing less water intensive crops, especially in Rajasthan where irrigation is through ground water.**
- **Recycling and re-using of water, especially in urban areas, has to be put in place, and rain water harvesting, artificial recharge, has to be made mandatory.**

He was of the opinion that all measures, even tough measures, have to be taken in order to save water. **To quote him: “Sam, Bedh, Dand, everything. I remember a Sanskrit slogan which said: ‘Prosperity is controlled by water’. If you want our state, our country to prosper, we have to look towards water only. That is a priority issue in the country.”**

He was all praise for Chennai city where stringent measures were announced for the purpose – water and electricity supplies would be cut off, in case of non-compliance of building laws.

**Mr. Chandrakant Nayadu, Resident Editor, Hindustan Times, Jaipur**, spoke on the role of media in social activism. If criticism is possible, then you don't have to resort to abuse, he said. He mentioned that he had worked in Bihar for some time and found that the response to all the criticism the media makes seemed generally very positive. Coming to the issue of water conservation, he felt that Rajasthan has not really responded; the govt. has not been as effective as it should have been.

#### PRIORITIES GONE AWRY?

**In a water deficient state like Rajasthan, there are 26 breweries coming up in Alwar. He said that this matter was reported in the media but not much response on the part of the Government was seen.**

Speaking on the role and response to media, he felt that over the years, the media's role has definitely changed and after the introduction of the 24 hour news channel, it has sometimes become even a little too invasive. He was of the opinion that journalists needed technical expertise to interview experts on technical issues. He felt that media certainly needs to educate itself before taking up development and other issues.

#### Health

**Barun Kanjilal from The Institute of Health Management and Research (IHMR)**, spoke on health and population status in the State of Rajasthan.

Stating the reasons for the backwardness of Rajasthan in the health sector, he said that the first problem in Rajasthan was the geographical barrier – a diversity of geographical locations - desert areas, tribal areas, plain areas and in some areas it is very difficult to access health facilities. Therefore, **accessibility and availability of health services** is a perennial problem in the state. The Government has been trying to solve this problem, yet it seems they have a long way to go.

The second problem, he stated, was that the **out of pocket expenditure of the public** - people paying from their own pocket, is very high. The latest estimate was close to Rs. 500 spent on major and minor ailments. This is in addition to the Government's spending. The govt. spends about Rs. 200 per capita but the people in Rajasthan spend even more and, interestingly, it is on travel, medicines etc. Even when they are at govt. hospitals, their expenditure is high. Considering the public expenditure, the trend is more or less constant over the years. Recently, some projects have been initiated which have pushed the public expenditure a little higher, but it needs to increase, as this issue needs to be addressed.

The third problem is the role of **the private sector in the state, so far as health and population** are concerned. The private sector is playing a role, but more independently of the public sector, driven often by economic motives. There seems little partnership between private and public sectors. As a result, the overall health and population goals of the state are being looked at differently by the two sectors. It is very important that a partnership between these two sectors is built up. Some attempts are being made. As far as hospitals are concerned, non clinical services are being contracted out but there is more to do and it is encouraging to see that govt. is thinking about it. Recently, there has been a workshop on the subject and this is already a positive step.

A very crucial aspect in the Rajasthan health sector is **the low protection against any health risk**. IHMR research in Rajasthan shows that people are really helpless against health shock. Before this shock and after this shock, i.e. when they go to the hospital, their resources often recede below poverty levels. There seems absolutely no protection against this shock.

The only way to deal with this is to take up some kind of **insurance**, he recommended. But private insurance is not the answer, as people cannot afford to pay the premium. So what is it that can be done? Two definite steps are ongoing - one is, of course, **the community based health insurance**. Like the water movement, whether some kind of movement can be started in the health sector also in rural areas to cover their own protection. In addition **a social insurance sort of protection**, could be started, where the government carries a life insurance, subsidizing the premium for the poor. He proposed these as possible solutions to challenges highlighted.

#### Social Policy

**Mr. Sudhir Verma from the Institute of Social Policy** spoke on **Social policy** or its lack, even after 58 years of independence.

He started the dialogue by stating that when he was asked to speak on social policy, he was a little non-plussed because there is **no social policy as such even after 58 years of independence. (Unfortunately, the social sector has been the most neglected sector of planning in the country and more so in a state like Rajasthan, he said).**

**The first task is to work together and develop policies, both at the Central and the state level, in the so-called BIMARU states, although Rajasthan is no longer in the BIMARU state category, he stated.**

He also spoke on **female foeticide and child marriage**. The affluence of money, and its growth is inversely proportional to the status of women, he opined. We find that in affluent states like Punjab and Haryana and the peripheral districts of Rajasthan there is much more female foeticide – the growth in the status of women has not been to the extent as men, he said.

He also highlighted that female foeticide or the child sex ratio is alarmingly declining in the country. The female foeticide act, the PNDP act, the child marriage restraint act, seem all powerful acts, but **“is it more than a mask we are all wearing?”** he asked.

#### NO POLITICAL WILL FOR SOCIAL REFORM?

**Mr. Verma said: “And let me also have the liberty of saying when we discuss these issues in a forum like this, most of us come to the conclusion that there is no political will for social reform. Now, why is there no political will? Why do we have to tell politicians to think about it? It should be the other way round. We should be told by political leaders, we should be informed as to what is the priority, what we should do, what is the community going to do on the issue.”** For the child marriage restraint act, I recall the case of **Bhanwari Devi**. Where was the support for Bhanwari Devi who fought, in a way for her life, yet there was hardly any reverberation from the society. Except for very active NGOs who supported Bhanwari Devi who was a victim of child marriage. But child marriages are still persisting. When we talk to people, or politicians or general society - the lame excuse is, 'it is a social matter, it will take its time.' Why? Why should it take a long time? **Why can't we come up with ideas? Why can't we come up with, not laws, but general opinion and campaigns that this has to be cured?** So I think some of these issues have to be looked at more seriously now that we have already entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century”.

Citing an example he said: “I recall as an election commissioner, I was going into the Dungur, Baswarh area in the election after 1991 and found on every wall an advertisement about a sonography machine. I told the collector who was accompanying that in 2001 he would find that in these very districts the child sex ratio would have declined. And this is what happened. This is what we saw in 2001.”

#### PNDP ACT – BUT NO TEETH?

**“Now why the PNDP Act is not really able to have that teeth? You have the authority, you have the advisory council, but why no action has been taken so far? You are running after the commercial sex workers, you are having a number of decoys but where are the decoys to go to the sonography centers? Why can't we think of these issues? And why can't we act?”** Sudhir Verma.

#### Civil Society Activism

In his presentation, **Professor Bhargava from the Institute of Development Studies** gave a glimpse of **civil society campaigns in the state**.

He thanked the previous speaker for having raised the issue of political will for social reform and said he would try to raise issues that could be taken up by the Parliamentarians and by professional politicians.

Rajasthan is known for civil society movements, he said. There was the very famous and very successful **Right to Information**, and **Right to Food movement**. He said he would begin with the Right to information movement which provided powerless people the accessibility to public records. And this right to information movement was a very visionary response to this process of empowerment. It all began with examining muster rolls and drought relief, he informed the roundtable. Now the government has become proactive, and provides the information on the website: how much does it spend and how many labourers have been employed. But this information often still remains incomplete because it does not tell us the number of cement bags, bajri (chips) etc. that were used, he said.

Professor Bhargava also spoke about the social audit at the Panchayat level, which had just been examined by them. “The records were presented but the process was like they were just telling us the amount. No questions were asked”, he said.

#### NEGATIVE FREEDOM FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

**Bhargava said: . So far as civil society goes one has reached a kind of plateau where you have an act that is passed by the parliament but where do we go from here? And here comes the role of politicians. Because this is a kind of negative freedom that has been achieved by civil society organizations, there is no coercive force around you that prevents you from doing something. So you have a Right to Information act - you can go and demand information. It is a major achievement, but parliament could have possibly gone so far. There are still civil society movements which are telling people to demand information, to exercise their right, but here comes the play of the political leaders, the parliamentarians, so that you could really achieve a kind of a positive freedom which means that there are circumstances that you can actually do it. I mean people sitting in the gram sabha should be able to actually ask questions. There comes the role of the parliamentarians. I mean where do the politicians stand? Where does this power come from? Is it coming from the power brokers in the villages or is it coming from the powerless people? It is for the Politicians to decide. I mean are you for de-centralization, do you want people to ask questions and what is it that MPs are doing about it; what is it that the political leaders are doing about it”?**

He also addressed the issue of **Right to Food**, a major issue taken up by civil society organizations, which was spurred by the drought relief work at the time when the PUCL filed a writ petition to the supreme court in 2001. The orders that emanated were very effective. Mid-day meal centers/ICDS centres, more ICDS centers exist in the country, today. The allocations to the ICDS centres have increased but then the rest of

the issues still remain. This, the politicians really need to think, he said, Do you want the mid-day meal a decentralized kind of activity or do you want to involve the philanthropic organizations to provide food to the schools? There is still an ensuing debate on these issues. In the case of PDS, he said that the supreme court ordered that if the PDS shop is not performing then those licenses need to be cancelled. Hence, the PDS control Act that has come up in Jharkand which gives only the self-help groups and the Panchayats the authority to run the shop. **He suggested to the politicians and parliamentarians, that the amount that is given for mid-day meals, which is a paltry 1.50 paise per child per day, could be raised. Similarly, in the ICDS, it is Rs 2 per child per day. More advocacy could be done around this, he concluded.**

### Media Activism

**Sunny Sebastian from The Hindu** traced 30 years of media activism in Rajasthan. Speaking about media activism, he praised Rajasthan state and said that the state has a tradition of media activism starting with **Sati**. The modern day media activism actually started around 20/21 years ago during the post Sati movement. That was the time when women were on the streets, he said. Of course, there were not many and only a selected few and that was the beginning that **led to a Sati Prevention Act, also a Central Act**. That was the beginning for movements supporting women's causes – it spearheaded human rights activism, too.

#### MEDIA ACTIVIST – A SCAPEGOAT FOR ALL

**“It is difficult to be a so-called media activist because of protests from one's own colleagues, from the management, from vested interest groups and finally, I don't want to miss this point, the NGOs, who are often conflicting amongst themselves. What are you writing, that kind of stuff,” Sunny Sebastian.**

He said that a great deal of work had been done on issues relating to environment by the media. He felt that the electronic media was greatly supporting the issue because once they grasp an issue, they do follow it up, which sometimes the print media does not. On the other hand, they are guilty of being sensational, one thing for which the print media is blamed. He cited instances of good activism – like the 80 year old woman who was confined behind bars in a small room by her daughter in law in Malviya Nagar, Jaipur, and other issues like **water, elephants etc**. One should protect the right of elephants in Aamir. There are 90 of them - all have come from outside, Then of course there is the issue of **tigers**. Rajasthan is one place where Sarvodaya and Bhoodan Movement have been very strong.

### Attitude of Parliamentarians

**Environmental Harshvardhan** raised important issues on the **attitude of parliamentarians and the quality of debates that take place in parliament.**

He started by asking certain questions to the Hon'ble MPs. He recalled that in the earlier days in his career, Members of Parliament and legislative assembly members used to be considered very powerful authorities. When approached on any issue either by telephone calls or discussions, issues would be taken up on the floor of the house.

He personally felt that compared to them, today's Members of Parliament, or Members of Legislative Assemblies do not take up the issues in a sincere, dedicated, committed, campaign manner, as it used to be done. When the debates in parliament are shown through the newspapers, it is felt that most of the time it is on **this dharna**, that dharna or **walk out on issues** which are not the issues of the govt. or the issues of the people of Rajasthan or people of the country, he said. Serious thinking **on the use of time** is required to be done in parliament, by parliamentarians, in all the legislative assemblies of various states by MLAs or Upper House, he concluded.

### Outcomes

**Mr. R. K. Poddar from CII** raised very basic questions on **“the outcomes”**, such as, 'Are we getting our basics right?' And would **industry want to be part of public/private partnership** if its funds are not reaching desired outcomes?

He started by saying that the messages have been garbled, the root cause of the current crisis. “We are trying to water the leaves without thinking of the roots”, he said. We need to keep in mind that we were dealing with life; all of our activities should be geared towards life, in whatever form, he suggested. He quoted **the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi**, who had said that of every rupee spent by the government on the poor, not more than 15 paise reach the beneficiary. When the government is itself admitting that no more than 5/10 paise is percolating down, could it be possible that one could obtain higher benefits than 10%?, he asked. **Growth has to be all inclusive**. It cannot be in islands. This is something that CII very strongly recommends that even with 6%, 8%, 10% growth, only islands should not grow, but it has to be a more inclusive process. The entire society has to grow. To that extent, a social commitment, and social responsibilities are essential, he remarked. In this context, he felt that the **major responsibility must be from the govt. to create infrastructure**. He defined infrastructure as the bedrock on which stands the edifice from which goods and services are provided to the citizens of the country as per their aspirations. **Whether in the form of health, education and roads services, the Government has to provide such infrastructure, said**. He added that when one talks of providing infrastructure, it should not be by statistical value.

#### DISCUSSION WITH HON. C.M. ON OUTCOMES

He spoke of his meeting with the Chief Minister of Rajasthan wherein a discussion took place on education. His question to the Hon'ble CM was – “Tell me very honestly, you say that you have 35,000 schools run, funded by the govt. Tell me, how many

of them are working properly? We have to go down to basics. We may have 35,000 schools and we are happy that we are providing education to all children up to the age of 8, 5, 6 or whatever but are we really doing it? Or this is just on paper. We go to the schools, you see the situation. Either in some places there are no teachers, or the classroom is not sufficient or they don't have a toilet there or they don't have water facilities. We are looking at just paper work. What have we really done? How much of it is really benefiting the client?"

He spoke on private/public partnership proposed by the government. In this context, he raised a very pertinent point – "If I am going to give something to the govt. and I know that not even 10% of it is going to percolate to the people, do you think I have a will to spend that money. May be not."

Education, though neglected, is a critical sector as youth are tomorrow's investment. By merely saying "India is great", it will not happen. A concerted design by Government in small forms will help, he said. Industries are good at management and successful. They should be asked to manage schools and given a free hand, systematizing administration. Ultimately, it is the quality of education and the quality of management that will decide the quality of the education system. Only if the education system works, then the India vision will work, otherwise it will be difficult.

Summing up his presentation, Mr. Poddar said that industry will also improve and be sustainable, if the entire economy improves and the entire quality of people that are in the economy improves. It is in the interests of the industry to ensure that social responsibility is taken forward because that is the sustenance of the industry. But the basics are that the government should understand that it has the entire responsibility to provide infrastructure to the masses. Unless and until they know the facts and set aside illusions on their perfection, it may be difficult to go forward with the vision of India for tomorrow, he concluded.

## Globalisation

**Mr. R. K. Sharma from CUTS** spoke about **WTO and globalisation**. Since the last one and a half year, he has been working on trade issues and he felt that this is a topic, a concern which has the potential to address all emerging problems.

### WTO: OPPORTUNITY OR THREAT?

**"In this period of globalisation, do we have that much capacity or have we thought enough how globalisation can be taken up as an opportunity that can translate all these challenges into assets for the country? But my concern which I would like to present is, how many of the policy makers are aware about WTO or how this can be taken up as a challenge, an opportunity for the country? WTO is a reality. You cannot turn your face from that reality. Our country is a founder member of this organization and I am sorry to say that most of the policy makers are unaware of the hidden benefits of WTO. Why we are looking at it adversely?"**

He cited an example: A couple of months ago there was a huge demonstration by farmers against power. The reality is that, these issues are being taken up in isolation, he said. At this agitation, they talked about the power hike which was announced by the Rajasthan Government but none of their organizations – the farmer organizations or their leaders – talked about **agriculture policy**. Agriculture is an important issue in WTO, he said. It is important because the majority of the population residing in the rural areas depend for their livelihood upon it. Yet, no one talked of agriculture. A policy, taking into account all these aspects – water, environment etc., is critical. **An agriculture policy for the state of Rajasthan, is vital.**

It is essential to organize a meeting that could discuss how the country or Rajasthan can progress to keep place with globalisation, within WTO. A WTO ministerial conference will take place soon, yet there seems to be no consensus. Whether policy makers or G-33, G-20, or SAARC countries, even consensus in India is not available. Issues that will be taken up at the WTO ministerial conference will, ultimately, affect the rights and benefits of the marginalized sections of society, he cautioned.

**"These are the things I request all of you people and MPs - we still have time to seriously think through this issues in the coming session and put up in the forefront. Those issues that are of critical concern to this marginalized sections; We are living with the myth that WTO is a threat to our social and economic structures and to several other factors, but it is not so because the research or ground reality indicates a different reality."**

## Public/Private Partnership

**Ms. Malti Jain from the PHD Chamber of Commerce (PHDCC)** raised the issue of **public/private partnership**.

Ms Malti opened her contribution by sharing the motto of PHDCC, "in community's life and part of it." She felt that the responsibility as industry should be well appreciated and encouraged. "We cannot afford to ignore society around our industry," she said. She informed of the Rural Development Foundation run by the organisation. Under this foundation, around 56 water harvesting structures at Alwar, Seetal and Karoli, have been built and even after 3 and a half years, thanks to the better management policies, these water harvesting structures are self sustainable as compared to other govt. schemes that are run in the vicinity of those projects. She opined that there is a need to pool in the best resources. "If we have better management systems, why not allow us to manage? You have the ownership with you but at least take us into the management policy and let us give you some suggestions. So you add up some scientific approach to the 'n' number of measures you are taking up to help the community to combat its various problems. That is our request. I think that this will work out for the betterment of everybody," she said.



Mr. Sukumar Verma from Rajasthan Patrika mentioned a concrete example of how a newspaper house could take tremendous interest in a campaign on water and other social causes and elicit support from the community.

He shared the motto of his organization which says that instead of looking at the government, **if the community were to take things into its own hands**, then most challenges could be achieved. The socially committed activities of Rajasthan Patrika exemplify this motto. With positive thinking, milestones can be created, he said.

In light of the media responsibility, he mentioned that the year before a campaign – **Jalashay Bachao Andolan** (Save Watersheds Campaign), was taken up by Rajasthan Patrika. “We were very moved that at just one call from us, this became a people’s movement in Jaipur. Particularly in Seetal and Jaipur districts we took up the work of restoring 22 Jalashays. (watersheds). We are very happy that the community is ready to respond to a sincere and committed effort. Motivated by this, we started the **Amritam Jalam Abhiyan** for water conservation. The objective was to undertake at least one major task in every district. We were surprised that everyone – the old and aged, women and children – joined in the movement, and within 7 days, 716 Jalashays which were almost dilapidated or neglected – were being used for garbage disposal and other functions – were restored. The common man joined hands. Within 7 days, 1,66,000 people did ‘shramdan.’ What was especially remarkable was that if any money was needed for the project, that too was procured by the community itself.”

#### GOVERNMENT’S ATTITUDE TO DEVELOPMENT

**The government has no will to address this issue. Why do they get 5 years? May be we have to continue to knock at their door for 5 years. Our Editor, Shri Gulab Kothari, says that they get 5 years – for us to be able to do social development! We have to fulfil our tasks.”**

**I will cite another example. Till last year the availability of plants from nurseries was free. At the call of Rajasthan Patrika, 22 lakhs plants were planted. Now, surprisingly the plants are no longer available for free. Consequently, this year, in spite of our best efforts, we could only get over 1 lakh plants planted.**

**What is the attitude towards development? To give an example: – the far-sightedness of Rajasthan Patrika in helping in the discovery oil in Barma. Barma can become another Dubai. A political comment on this was: “Kya aap rait mein pani ka jahaj chalayenge?” Sukumar Verma.**

#### Response from MPs



*“Meeting of Minds” at Jaipur, Nov. 11, 2005, at Rajputana Palace Sheraton*

Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD, invited the visiting MPs to respond to the issues raised by the speakers.

**Smt. Jamuna Devi Barupal, Rajya Sabha member from Indian National Congress**, thanked ICPRD for this Roundtable. She said that after listening to everybody narrating all kind of challenges faced by common people in their day to day life, she had to bring to the notice of the table that **the Dalit group**, especially women, seemed neglected. Even after 58 years of independence, the Dalit group is oppressed. It appears as if the freedom that independence has brought about has not touched their lives at all. She congratulated Rajasthan Patrika for the yeoman work being done which she particularly enjoined for exposing them to the sufferings of the Dalits and highlighting the atrocities inflicted on them. Dalit women are being oppressed in free India, she said. She brought an example of **a village girl who had been raped in a Rajasthan village**. Still everyone was trying to save the rapist but no one was thinking of the helpless girl. Such incidents must be highlighted and justice meted out.

Several people raised the issue of water. **The dalit farmer goes to the field, but he has no land, he has no water. The Dalit woman does not bathe for 8 days in a row because she does not have access to water. She has to travel long distances to fetch water.**

The children have no access to education. Schools are far flung, or there are no teachers in school. If the mother is not educated how can she educate her children. It is believed that the mother’s womb is the cradle of education. The early education by a mother is higher than any university.

There are no health facilities. Hospitals are far away from the villages, and there are no competent doctors.

**“Pay heed to the pain and suffering of the Dalits. Give them equal opportunities. Give them equal status in society. Let them experience the 58 years of independence in their lives”**, she lamented.

**Mr. Chandra Sekhar Reddy, Rajya Sabha member from Telegu Desam Party**, thanked all the participants for enlightening the MPs and promised that in the coming session they would definitely try to reply and reflect their views in debates in the Parliament. He said that poverty was the biggest challenge in the country which, in his limited experience, is caused by population, illiteracy and drought.

Traditionally “agriculture seemed our culture”, he said, but at present, it seems in real distress and so do the farmers. He said that he comes from a state where suicides are increasing. He raised the issue in parliament and initiated a debate. The govt. tried to respond in a positive way. Some concrete suggestions were made during the debate and the Hon’ble Agriculture Minister responded positively. In the aspect of farmer suicides, the media played a crucial role in the state.

### 36 POLITICAL PARTIES: INFORMED PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES!

He admitted that the present level of debate in parliament was not up to the mark, due to political reasons. Today there are about 36 political parties in the parliament. Many parties have one or two members. And every political party member is keen to voice his opinion, reflect his party’s philosophy and ideology in parliament. And above all, there are dharnas, walkouts.

He said that what is needed is information and for which he cited an example of the time when he had tried to raise the issue of farmers, he had been searching for information. He obtained information from various parts of the country, and after going through the papers, he realized that Kerala stood highest on suicides cases for different reasons. And he went on to analyse the details of Kerala suicides.

He felt that it is very difficult to procure information, compile it, present it in a given time. He requested ICPRD to create a cell within the organization which could help parliamentarians in advocating or highlighting issues. He concluded by saying that he would make efforts to improve his participation in parliament. Chandrashekhar Reddy, MP.

**Mr. Gireesh Kumar Sanghi, Rajya Sabha member from Indian National Congress**, thanked ICPRD for taking this initiative to have a series of debates on Human Rights and development.

As a journalist he said he had a varied experience on corruption and atrocities, on the lethargy, on political hurdles, on conspiracies and collusion between politics. Like Rajasthan Patrika in Rajasthan, even in Andhra Pradesh, he had taken up several issues which have benefited the common man through “**Vartha**.”

### POLITICIANS VERSUS BUREAUCRATS!

**“There are several issues we debate and most of the time during such discussion you end up trying to blame each other - on one side there will be politicians and on the other side there will be bureaucrats. And they blame each other.**

**There are around 4000 politicians, 800 MPs, 3200 MLAs, and almost an equal number of IAS Officers. If this 800 to 1000 people come to one consensus, nobody in this world could stop our progress, he felt. India is a great country. Gireesh Sanghi, MP.**

He felt that the industry had not achieved the expected results and blamed also the Indian mindset for this. Unless mindsets are changed, self-confidence increased, the kind of national growth envisaged would not be possible, he cautioned.

Entrepreneurial skills are necessary, “We have over 110 crores of population and 2% of our population as NRIs. The GDP of our country is equal to the GDP of this 2% NRIs. This shows that once an Indian is given the right opportunity and platform, he can definitely perform. This indicates that something is lacking in our country.”

He ended his presentation citing a small example on mind set. In Hyderabad, an entrepreneur was encouraged to develop the first mall. The Chief Minister did his best to see that the mall was one of the show pieces of Hyderabad. When the first theatre opened, the bureaucracy stepped in. He had done the best that he could, in terms of seating capacity, fire-fighting equipment, nevertheless, all kind of objections were raised. After running from pillar to post for a whole year, he recently managed to get a clearance.

**Mr. Anant Kumar Hegde, Lok Sabha member from BJP**, expressed his hope that this Roundtable would not become a mere formality but would lead to concrete results. He promised to make all efforts necessary to reflect the opinions expressed in Parliament.

India has progressed a lot in the last decade and seems second overall to none in almost all sectors. The economy is stable and contributing to the overall world economy in several areas, he said.

Referring to the previous speaker's views on the **privatization of education**, he mentioned that the Karnataka government has launched a scheme whereby government schools are run by the private sector. The output seems good and some more of such initiatives should be started, he said.

20 years ago, a campaign was launched in his constituency, where there were small and marginal farmers. People obtained higher education but were forced to sit at home. He says: “We took up the

challenge that no one is going to sit at home. Now, after 20 years the results are emerging. You won't believe that almost half of the families have at least a member abroad in the IT sector. A person I knew in childhood is today a genius in robot technology. The Korean and Japanese government are both staking a claim to him! This is the talent we have in our country. But we have to give it a proper direction. Till that happens, we will continue to argue and debate but nothing will come out of it."

He said, that India's growth trends in the past decade could not be found in any other country of the world – be it infrastructure development, level of education, health services. Today, his constituency boasts of more than 98% educated people. In Bangalore there are more than 593 IT companies. Of that 183 companies are headed by people from his constituency.

**He added further "We may dream of a global village but we must think globally but act locally. Ultimately, we have to live where we are."**

"So what we need to concentrate on is the use of **globalisation to our advantage**. We have an organization and grow vanilla of international quality. Today we are exporting 100% of our product. What is the economic cost? In business, we work with profits of 2%, 5%, 10%. But in agriculture, we want 100%. How can we expect that? May be we have to think how to compete with our global friends through value added concepts. Until and unless we do this, we cannot succeed, in every sector – be it agriculture, industry or education. **Here in India, the syllabus is decided by the government. There the Professors decide the syllabus.** Ultimately, it is a game of numbers.

He also mentioned the availability on the internet of the amendments that are executed in parliament. When amendments of some substance are given, they are often put aside.

#### **ELIGIBILITY FOR AMP**

**He shared that there was a young parliamentarians' group that discussed the minimum eligibility for a MP. There are qualifications to become a doctor, an engineer, or a professor, but there is no eligibility criteria for a person who is responsible to manage the entire country. How can we compete with our global partners? He asked. Anant Kr. Hegde, MP.**

He also put the onus on the media, which he said, has to play a more positive role, by highlighting the good things happening in the country. In the end, he requested those present to continue to guide and inform them so that they could learn and move ahead in the right direction.

**Ms. Kiran Maheshwari representing the BJP, said that this was her second experience in this Round table of listening to enlightening thoughts from the four pillars of a society which, she said, are all represented here.**

First, she spoke of the **Media** and the powerful role it can play in creating awareness and involving the community in social development. She mentioned as a good example, Rajasthan Patrika and its contribution to the Jalashay Bachao Andolan. She said that she belonged to Udaipur - a city which was known as the city of lakes, but in the last 10 years, the city has dried up.

Achieving development is a combined goal, she said. "Earlier, Rajasthan was called a BIMARU state, but today, amongst people from other states, one does not feel that we belong to a BIMARU state. We feel that we have highly developed ", she said.

**"When people request me for a hand pump to be installed, I ask the concerned department how much it will cost, and the answer is that it will cost Rs. 35,000/-. When I put this same question to the Sarpanch, he says it will cost Rs. 15,000/- 20,000/- Why this difference? Is it a communication gap? It is difficult to understand. If we are able to access basic necessities for the common man at minimum amounts, only then can we progress towards development. If departments are only engaged in spending money on buildings and other unnecessary overheads, how can they hope to access basic necessities at reasonable rates? This is an example out of many. It is in effect a Pandora's box. The list is endless."** she concluded.

She expressed her gratitude to ICPRD for organizing such a workshop in Rajasthan.

#### **NATIONAL INTEREST ABOVE ALL**

**So all the pillars of society have to work together in terms of national interest. We should be able to rise above our political ideologies, the party we belong to and only think of national interest. The bureaucrats also have to think of national interest and not serve the political masters of the day. All of us think of development, and rights of the people and with this in mind, we have also to think of programme implementation. ICPRD was also established with these very aims and goals. That is the reason why an all-party meet has been called here, and representatives from different sectors of society have been invited to such an interaction to discuss and learn of ways and means on how to take the country forward, and the nature of development to focus on. Kiran Maheshwari, MP.**

#### **DELIBERATIONS**

Dr. Nandini Azad opened the floor for discussion, observations, comments and clarifications on the issues emerging from the presentations:

**Mr. Gireesh Sanghi** said that he was in agreement with Ms. Kiran Maheshwari's statement on the issue of varying cost estimates quoted for the same work.

He also had a similar experience. MPs are sanctioned Rs. 2 crores per annum as a MPLADS fund. He assured the gathering that, by and large, all MPs spend this fund as judiciously as possible. In his constituency, the villagers requested him to set up a high mast light – that will help the entire village to glow. To quote him: “I agreed to do that and to my surprise the approved rate for that constituency was Rs. 75,000/- And nearby constituency was Rs. 1,40,000/- When they erected the first high mast light, I went to inaugurate it. As we know what the costings are, when I inaugurated I gave the costings myself, as I know how much it should cost. It should not cost more than Rs. 25,000/-. So I called the contractor and asked him what the cost of this mast was.” “I’ve got approved rate”, he said. Then I called a quotation from Philips, and got around 100 high mast lights erected at Rs. 36,000/- by the same contractor!

In India, unfortunately, a **proper costing system** is not available, he said. Cost accountancy seems totally neglected, especially in the govt. sector. There seems to be no audits. Thousands and thousands of crores are spent, yet where it is delivered, nobody knows, he regretted.

**“As a member of the standing committee of chemicals and fertilizer, I have to address the details of drug pricing. There have been certain evidences in front of the committee and one evidence is that one organization told us that in Tamil Nadu, bulk purchases are made – pool purchase. The pool purchase cost ranges from 2% - 11% of the MRP cost. The same drug is sold at Rs. 100/- . In a pool purchase, the cost would be only Rs. 2/- . This is the kind of difference! If we really want value for money in our country and if we want to accelerate our growth, I think we have to look into these details more specifically. As intellectuals who participate in these debates, you should throw more light on priorities, on costs, on quality.”**

**Mr. Surjit Singh** felt that it was necessary to have informed debates in the parliament on issues. To this, Mr. Gireesh Sanghi replied that every issue is debated at length. Speakers speak on sensitive subjects.

**Ms. Malti Jain** enquired whether there was a statement, a partywise consensus after the debate and whether specific agenda plans are announced.

**Mr. Sunny Sebastian** felt that these do not get into the media.

**Mr. Gireesh Sanghi** replied that normally media did not go into that kind of reporting. In parliament, serious discussions take place. On certain issues, because of political compulsions, ideology or their thinking, there may be differences, but this khichdi or coalition – who is responsible for this? It is the voter. 36 different parties are being voted in.

It was the turn of **Mr. R. K. Poddar to add to the discussion**. He said that some speakers raised an issue that **Hindustan was a golden bird**. He did not dispute this fact, he said. Speaking of globalisation, he said, we need to change at the same pace at which the world is changing, or else we will be left behind.

“But when you look at certain minimum levels required for our citizen – like, for instance, the need for clean water. If I am not able to provide clean water, is it sufficient for me to say that I am great in IT but you don’t need your water? We need to address basic issues. We cannot camouflage it with islands of excellence. There will be islands of excellence, but what we need is to identify problems and to really identify it in our soul. Do we seriously have a political will to tackle those problems and find solutions to them? This is what basic management is all about,” he opined.

**Mr. Chandrashekar Reddy** requested all participants to provide literature on the work undertaken by their respective organization to the MPs.

#### **Summing up by Dr. Nandini Azad**

**“We have come together here as public citizens. We just happen to have a podium with a difference, an interactive platform. We can express each other, learn from each other, strengthen each other. This is a new trend that is emerging. There is no MP versus citizen, but together “for development”.**

**While closing this session, let me thank the academicians, the intellectuals, the practitioners, and my very dear media activist friends for making this absolutely so informative and no political overtones, but clear development direction.**

**They voiced the same things that we want to raise, there are problems in the Institutions that they are representing. So I think it is a very good beginning and the interaction was very useful. They are at least confiding in citizens on their challenges. Otherwise, the NGO/Civil society sector tends to blame them. On the other hand, they also think NGOs are not doing any work. So our limited purpose was to bring about an interactive and cooperative effort where we can understand each other better – start communicating, petitioning, caucusing, and using each other. So thank you very much for being here this morning, keeping time, bringing up the issues. I am really very impressed by the level of discussions in this workshop. Very rightly, the young Member of Parliament said - Yes, outcomes. This is the beginning of an interface – outcomes will take time, and delivery is so much in one’s mind”.**

**National Street Theater Workshops with Young Men as Partners for Combating Gender Based Violence in the States of Rajasthan, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu (Bangalore, Sept., 2005; Jaipur, Nov., 2005)**



*View of women's credit group members at National Street Theatre Workshop, Karnataka, Sept. 19, 2005*

During the MPs' Exposure Visits, both in Bangalore and Jaipur cities, the visiting MPs participated in National Street Theatre Workshops, wherein youth from different states of Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu came together to **work out appropriate strategies and methodologies for creating a communication platform**. The workshop emphasized the use of street theatre as a communication tool by young men as partners in combating violence against women; in order to create mass awareness in the community through this methodology.

The MPs were given a traditional welcome with flowers, aarti and 'turbans', on their arrival in the avenues at Bangalore and Jaipur, respectively.

During the course of the three-day workshop, youth shared experiences and worked out common understanding of the issues pertaining to gender based violence and tackling them by developing mechanisms and tools for sensitization. This endeavor is unique as it is the first time such an effort is taking place in India, though the programme was earlier tried out in Africa.

The youth team from Rajasthan welcomed the MPs and guests with a song, which was followed by a performance rendered by the Tamil Nadu group depicting the ethnicity and colour of Tamilnadu. The song also "invited people from house to house and door to door to join them in the mass campaigns at the same time assuring that it would not cost them any money to create social change".

The youth from Karnataka depicted a play titled "**Sita**" which narrated the different roles that a woman has to play in her lifetime. The play began with the reaction of the father on receiving the news of a birth of a girl child. The characters in the play went on to show the discrimination that is meted out to a girl child vis-à-vis

a male in the family. Through the process of socialization, boys and girls receive differing inputs about what constitutes the "right" behavior expected of them – that certain behavior is acceptable for boys but not for girls, and vice versa. These gender roles become especially vivid in the transitory phase of life i.e. adolescence. Ascribed gender roles within this age group strongly influence their personality traits, work participation and future employment perspectives. While the son is encouraged to attend school, restrictions are imposed on the daughter, who is kept in the house for domestic chores. She is even queried as to why she wants to go to school. Education is meant only for boys whereas the girls have to do all the household tasks.

The play raises certain pertinent questions like - Is this what womanhood is all about? Can we stop this? Can male and female be treated equally? Shouldn't dowry be made a punishable offence?, child marriage be abolished? Shouldn't the Government introduce laws on domestic violence? Why can't we stop this injustice meted out towards women? Why should women go through all this for no fault of theirs?

The play then moves on to question the practice of early child marriages along with harassment faced with regard to dowry. The woman is then expected to perform different roles of a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law, sister-in-law etc. with low returns or even respect for the contribution she makes.

The youth groups from Tamil Nadu then performed a play in which they interspersed the performance with appropriate songs, raising critical questions with regard to violence against women in the realm of their home. The play also highlighted the ramifications of **alcoholism** on family life. The violence perpetrated against women, both inside and outside their homes, is often a reflection of a society's attitude towards women. In most communities, gender roles are ascribed and defined under the influence of a collective consciousness and community norms. The **skit begins** with the man of the family getting work after four days of unemployment, since there is no food in the family. He finds some work with the zamindar of the village and earns his salary at the end of the day. But here the story takes a different turn. Instead of going home to his wife & children he spends the fruit of his labour at an alcohol shop. The effect of the intoxicant is so strong that he even borrows money from his friend to drink further. He reaches home late in the night but only to snatch his wife's ornaments for furthering his indulgence. When she retaliates, he beats up his wife as well as his children. Consciousness strikes only when his youngest child succumbs to starvation and his severe beating. But by then, the story is over. **The small skit powerfully portrays the effect of alcohol on the family, including food security and child abuse. It is often the precursor to several other problems in the family.**

The final performance of the day was the **fusion of Images** which transcended the realms of multilingual diversity. Participants from all the three states portrayed various images. The delegates were then asked to identify the issues and suggest alternative solutions. An excerpt of the issues covered in the imagery is described as follows:

- **Group 1 depicted the issue of girl child discrimination,**
- **Group 2 enacted the ramifications of alcoholism,**
- **Group 3 dealt with the issue of child marriage, and**
- **Group 4 depicted the situation of eve teasing and rape.**

The participants and Hon. MPs were asked to identify the issues portrayed and suggest possible solutions. With regard to the issue of girl child discrimination, one participant enacted that she would insist on going to school and not do household chores.

### Bangalore City Response to Youth Street Theatre on Gender Based Violence



Ms. Kiran Maheshwari, MP, participating in rape scene at image fusion at ICPRD's National Street Theatre Workshop in Janapada Loka, Karnataka, Sept. 19, 2005

Ms. Parvati, a grassroots activist from WWF (Working Women's Forum), Tamil Nadu, said that today, not only is she stronger and capable of handling situations, but is also able to motivate other women to fight against atrocities perpetrated on them. Citing an example, she said that some time back, the bus fares were hiked and women were badly affected. The credit groups of WWF succeeded in sending over 5000 women to petition the Hon'ble Governor. The Hon'ble Governor took cognizance of the intensity of the movement and effected a lowering of bus fares. Ms. Parvati added that it was a constant effort at WWF to create awareness amongst people from all walks of life. WWF started with 700 women and today, it has over 7 lakh women working in the movement.

### CONTRASTING OPINIONS!

On the issue of eve-teasing and sexual harassment, Mr. Satpathy, MP, said it often happens that the family and society do not offer moral support to victims. Offering solutions, he said that girls/women should be careful and equip themselves with aerosol sprays, alarms bells, etc.

Speaking on the issue of rape, Ms. Kiran Maheshwari, MP, said that only when men look at women as mothers and sisters, will the situation improve. She felt that our value system is often misplaced. Women needed to be empowered to deal with such situations, she said.

### Quotable Quotes

**Ms. Kiran Maheshwari, MP:** "I agree with Mr. Chaudhury. However, I would like to question him on behalf of all women present here. What is his opinion regarding the women's reservation Bill. Would he, as an MP, support the same?"



Shri Tathagata Satpathy looks on as Dr. Azad requests community response at ICPRD's National Street Theatre Workshop, Karnataka, Sept. 19, 2005

**Mr. Chaudhury, MP:** "I thank everyone for coming from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Rajasthan and for sharing their work with us. I would like to say that training should begin from home from parents since family is the strongest institution." "We are in the Lok Sabha and are aware of what Government of India is doing for women. I will definitely support the bill but it is important to see that once the law is passed, it is implemented."

**Mr. Meena, MP:** "I thank you all for giving this platform. You have gathered here to discuss issues, which are important in society. If we look at the situation of women, we know that a lot of struggle has gone on in the past, and is continuing even today. Education is the key to address the problem. Organisations, such as ICPRD, are working well and men should also join the movement."

## Jaipur City Response to Youth Street Theatre on Gender Based Violence



*Shri Anant Kumar Hegde emphasizing girl child education while participating in image fusion, the skit, at ICPRD's National Street Theatre Workshop, Jaipur, Nov. 11, 2005*

**Mr. Anant Kumar Hegde, MP** from Karnataka, while reflecting on the issue of girl child discrimination, said that the mother should give affection to both children and the girl child should also be allowed to study. At this point, it was queried if this can be done in today's context. Can women "grapple" with such situations in real life?



*Shri Chandrasekhar Reddy, MP, substituting the role of the girl child in the fusion image on socialization process at ICPRD's 2nd National Street Theatre Workshop, Jaipur, Nov. 11, 2005.*

**Mr. Chandrasekhar Reddy, Hon. MP** from Andhra Pradesh substituted the image by saying that women should become empowered to deal with such situations and all family members should contribute to household work.

At this stage, Mr. Gireesh Sanghi, Hon. MP from Andhra Pradesh interjected with a very interesting quote while he enacted in the play: "If I were the father, I would have educated my wife first, so that she could then teach my children. Education has to percolate from the parents down to the children. If parents are not aware of the value of education, how can we expect the same from children?"

On the second issue pertaining to alcoholism, Ms. Jamuna Devi Barupal from Bikaner sang a very beautiful folk song in Rajasthani as the sister of an

alcoholic in order to stop him from drinking and destroying his family.

On the issue of rape, Dr. Azad interjected, saying: "Ideally, the rapist should not be spared. But we also have to be very careful in such a case as violence breeds further violence. However, depending on situations, if it has to be resorted to by women, then a sensible weapon, such as community pressure, is required.



*Shri Anant Kumar Hegde, MP (BJP), Shri Chandrasekhar Reddy, MP, (TDP), Shri Gireesh Sanghi and Smt. Jamuna Devi Barupal (MPs, INC) at ICPRD's 2nd National Street Theatre Workshop at Jaipur, Nov. 11, 2005*

Mr. Sanghi enacted the role of a Sarpanch who wants to stop the mother from marrying off her two small children. He explained the laws and legalities related to punishment of offenders. According to him the people of the area should be made aware of the problems associated with child marriage.

The performances were followed with an open interaction among the Members of Parliament and the assembled youth. The questions ranged from the problem of unemployment to the current problems in the area to the MPs responsibility to the nation!

Dr. Nandini Azad thanked the youth, audience and MPs for their participation and suggested solutions. The programme concluded with the participants joining in the gaiety by dancing and encouraging the dignitaries to also join in the exuberance.



*Interface of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan Youth Groups with MPs' team at ICPRD's 2nd National Street Theatre Workshop at Jaipur, Nov. 11, 2005*

## Profiles of MPs – Exposure Visit I

**Choudhary Lal Singh, (INC), MP,** 14th Lok Sabha from Udhampur (J&K) is an agriculturist and businessman. He has been a Member (J&K) legislative assembly, Ministry of Health & ME, Govt of J&K in 2004, he was elected to 14th Lok Sabha and has been the member on committee on Pvt members bills & resolutions, & the committee on Railways. Choudhary Lal Singh is actively involved in working for the labour & agricultural classes and has authored a book 'Man of the Masses'.

**Smt. Kiran Maheshwari, (BJP), MP,** Lok Sabha from Udaipur, Rajasthan has been closely associated with the BJP since 1987. She has completed her B.Com from University of Mumbai and has served as Durgavahini Pramukh, Udaipur in 1987-90. She has also served in state social welfare Board, Bharat Vikas Parishad, Bhartiya lions parisangh etc. She has organized the first Mahila Co-operative Bank, of Rajasthan.

Smt. Maheshwari has served as the President in District BJP Mahila Morcha, Udaipur, BJP Mahila Morcha, Rajasthan and as member in National executive BJP. She is currently the State General Secretary and National Secretary, BJP.

**Shri. Tathagata Satpathy, (BJD),** Lok Sabha, MP from Dhenkanal (Orissa) is a senior editor of leading Oriya daily 'Dharitri'. He is the son of Ex-C.M. of Orissa. Smt. Nandini Satpathy. He was initiated in the political arena in 1990 when he was elected as Member, Orissa legislative Assembly in 1998. He arrived on the national political scene as MP, Lok Sabha. He is currently a MP, Lok Sabha (2nd term) and member, Committee on IT.

**Shri. Moolchand Meena, (INC)** a veteran Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan is a prominent agriculturist & a lawyer. He has completed his M.A (Political Science) & LL.B from Rajasthan University. He has been associated the INC since 1970, & was NSUL President Sawai Madhopur in 1971-74. Since then, he has served on various committees of INC & was Joint Secretary AICC when he was elected to Rajya Sabha in 2000 May and has been serving till date.

**Shri Hanumanthappa (INC),** a Lok Sabha MP from Chitradurga, Karnataka is a Lawyer. He has completed M.A.B.L from Renukacharya Law College, Bangalore. He has been Chief Justice, Orissa; Chairman, One Man Commission for Internal Reservation for SC/ST in State of Karnataka and was elected to the 14<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha. Presently, he is Member, Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law & Justice; Member Committee on Subordinate Legislation and Member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of Urban Development.

## Profiles of MPs – Exposure Visit II

**Shri Anant Kumar Hegde, (BJP), MP, Karnataka,** was re-elected to the 14<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha, his third term. He has been Member, Committee on Finance; Member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of External Affairs; Whip, BJP Parliamentary Party, Lok Sabha; Member, Committee on Home Affairs; Member, Consultative Committee; Ministry of Environment and Forests; Member, Committee of Privilege; Member, Committee on Commerce. He is Founder Chairman of Kadamba, a NGO working on environmental and socio-economic issues.

**Shri Gireesh Kumar Sanghi, (INC), MP, Andhra Pradesh,** former Journalist/Writer, Industrialist and Agriculturist, was elected to the Rajya Sabha in June 2004. Since August 2004, he has been Member, Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers.

**Shri Ravula Chandra Sekar Reddy, (TDP), MP, Andhra Pradesh,** has been a Rajya Sabha member since April 2002. An advocate by profession, Shri Reddy has held the following positions: 1987-89 Chairman, Andhra Pradesh Housing Board; 1994-99 Member, Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly; 1995-99 Government Chief Whip, Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

**Smt. Jamana Devi Barupal, (INC), MP,** was elected to the Rajya Sabha in April 2000. January 2001 onwards she has been Member, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture; Member, Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Coal and Mines; Special Invitee, Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Power. She has authored a book titled, 'Akhar Prernageet'. She has actively participated in social and cultural activities and worked for the upliftment of women; campaigned for eradication of prevalent social evils for the upliftment of Dalits; struggled for the elimination of untouchability. She has been honoured with the Meghwal Samaj Ratna; the Veerangana Jhalkari Bai Award by the Bhartiya Dalit Sahitya Academy sponsored by Dr. Ambedkar Philosophy Sahitya Academy in the year 2000 and the Mahila Shiromani Award in the year 2003.





# Comments from MPs and Participants!

**Mr. Anant Kr. Hegde, MP from BJP** expressed his hope that this Roundtable will not become a mere formality but will lead to certain concrete results. "We will make all efforts to reflect your opinions in the Parliament."

**Mr. Chandrasekhar Reddy, MP from Telegu Desam Party**, said: "After hearing all suggestions and the thoughts of the persons who spoke at length, I am here to thank all the participants for enlightening and in the coming session I hope we will definitely try to reply. We will try to reflect your views in debates in the Parliament."

**Mr. Gireesh Sanghi, MP from Indian National Congress** congratulated ICPRD for taking this initiative to have a series of debates on Human Rights and development.

**Mr. Alan Nazareth from Sarvodaya International Trust** congratulated ICPRD for setting up a caucus of development in the parliament, commenting that we are reviving the memories of the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhiji through these endeavours.

**Shri Tathagata Satpathy, MP from BJD** congratulated ICPRD for its initiative.

**Ms. Kiran Maheshwari, MP from BJP** thanked ICPRD for getting together the elite and the knowledgeable group on a common platform for discussing several issues.

**Ch. Lal Singh, MP from INC** commended ICPRD for its effort.

**Mr. Samuel Paul, Chairman, Public Affairs Committee, Bangalore** thanked ICPRD for providing a platform for exchanging ideas in terms of best practices.

**Smt. Jamuna Devi Barupal, MP from Indian National Congress** thanked ICPRD for this Roundtable.

# WHAT THE PRESS HAD TO SAY!

The pioneering effort of ICPRD received widespread media coverage in leading English and Regional newspapers in both cities – Bangalore and Jaipur.

## About Us

**Hindustan Times, Jaipur**  
Saturday, November 12, 2005

### Activism on all fronts key to development, say experts

By Dr. Chandrasekhar...

...development is not just about economic growth, but also about social justice and environmental sustainability. Experts at a meeting of minds in Jaipur stressed that activism on all fronts is key to achieving these goals.

#### MEETING OF MINDS

The meeting, organized by ICPRD, brought together experts from various fields to discuss the challenges of development in Jaipur and the role of activism in addressing these challenges. The participants agreed that a holistic approach is needed, one that considers the needs of all stakeholders and the environment.

**BANGALORE**  
THE HINDU • TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2005

### Funds meant for rural development wasted: MP

Tens of thousands of rupees were spent on...  
...wasted funds meant for rural development. The MP highlighted the need for better planning and execution of rural development projects.



**THE HINDU • MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2004**

### Parliamentary debates find few takers for people's issues

A team of MPs voice their desperation over the state of affairs in Parliament.

...Parliamentary debates often fail to address the concerns of the common people. A group of MPs expressed their frustration over the lack of meaningful discussions on key issues.

**THE NEW INDIA EXPRESS**  
Bangalore  
Tuesday, September 20, 2005

### Development of urban poor a dire need, say activists

...The development of the urban poor is a dire need. Activists are calling for more government intervention and support for housing and infrastructure projects in urban areas.

**HONGKONG HERALD**  
Tuesday, September 20, 2005

### Opinion makers differ on development paradigm

...Opinion makers are divided on the best development paradigm. Some advocate for rapid economic growth, while others emphasize social and environmental sustainability.

**The Times of India, Bangalore**  
Tuesday, September 20, 2005

### Think beyond Bangalore

'Meeting of Minds' Wants Planning In Rural Areas Too

...The 'Meeting of Minds' initiative is calling for more comprehensive planning that goes beyond Bangalore. It emphasizes the need for balanced regional development and investment in rural areas.

**जनप्रतिनिधियों और यूथ के बीच संवाद**

### जनप्रतिनिधियों और यूथ के बीच संवाद

...A dialogue between representatives and youth. The workshop facilitated a meaningful exchange of ideas and concerns between the two groups.



**राजनेता राष्ट्रीय हित के लिए राजनीति से ऊपर उठें**

...Politicians should rise above politics in national interest. A workshop on building a network of parliamentary advocates for development was held to discuss this and other issues.



**Slum children slug it out for a cause**

...Slum children are fighting for their cause. The article highlights the struggles of children in slum areas and the need for social and economic reforms.

**Development Pa...**

...Development is a complex process. The article discusses the challenges of development and the role of various stakeholders.

### Street Play Workshop at Jawahar Kala Kendra A dialogue between People's Representatives and Youth

'Raising questions to parliament representatives they had elected to Parliament, the clarifications drawing forth strong protests, the dialogue honing up, and then a pledge to look for solutions and all this followed by an exuberant dance - dance to the sound of drums reaching the heavens - a dance in which all participated - MPs as well as the youth representatives.' This scene was enacted on Friday at the Muktakashi theatre of Jawahar Kala Kendra. At the Street Play Workshop organized by Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development (ICPRD), youth representatives from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan highlighted the various atrocities faced by

women and at the same time held a dialogue with the Members of Parliament through the medium of theatre. MPs Chandrasekhar Ruddy, Anant Hegde, Jamuna Devi Barupal, Gireesh Sanghi, and Kiran Maheshwari were present at the Workshop. The participants had the unique task of communicating each of their message only through body movements. The performing young men and women from Rajasthan, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu could not understand each other's language but had come together on a single platform to highlight women atrocities. These youth representatives from three states highlighted issues such as dowry, rape and unemployment through the medium of theatre.

### Politicians should rise above politics in national interest

#### A Workshop on Building a Network of Parliamentary Advocates for Development

In national interest, politicians should rise above politics. A workshop on building a network of parliamentary advocates for development was held to discuss this and other issues.

...The workshop was a significant event that brought together experts and practitioners from various fields. It provided a platform for sharing ideas and experiences, and for identifying common goals and strategies for development.

### Development Pa...

...Development is a complex process. The article discusses the challenges of development and the role of various stakeholders.

**Development Pa...**

...Development is a complex process. The article discusses the challenges of development and the role of various stakeholders.



**Editorial Team :**  
 Ms. Neelam Prakash  
 Dr. Nandini Azad

**Production Team :**  
 Ms. Yllaylee Das  
 Mr. Sanjay Samantara

**Administrative Support :**  
 Ms. Sumita Chakraborty  
 Mr. Anil Tirkey  
 Mr. Pankaj Thakur

**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 6480 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.
- **57 MPs, legislators etc in India and 11 SAARC / European MPs.**
- 80 Technical experts / Academia, universities
- 190 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 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).

#### ICPRD niche areas to recap are:

- *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.*

**I  
C  
P  
R  
D**

**The Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development**

**A-13, Nizamuddin East**

**New Delhi – 110 013 India**

**Tel. : 91-11-24356110**

**Telefax : 91-11-24356570**

**E-mail : icprd@ndb.vsnl.net.in**

**Website : www.icprd.org**