

The Independent Commission for People's Rights & Development

NEWSLETTER

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Citizens' interface: Building a Network of Parliamentarians/Legislators for Development - MPs' Exposure Visits

CITIZENS' REPORT CARD ON DEVELOPMENT

Challenges of Governance

Citizens are concerned today ever than more about the "**Challenges of Governance**". Be it the "**politics of development**", the "**industrialization versus agrarian**" debate, the dynamics of the citizens' role in monitoring governance are transforming dramatically. With a 9% growth rate but 830 million living at Rs. 20 a day (Mega Survey by National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS), a government-affiliated body), growing inequities and parallel growth process seem evident. **No longer is the citizen a bystander. She wants a voice and a voice that can be heard loud and clear by the powers that be, with solutions.**

The Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development (ICPRD) is spearheading a unique concept of "Citizens' Interface" with a Report on Governance through its MPs/MLAs' Exposure Visit Scheme that is being initiated by an NGO for the first time in the country. **Through Round table meetings, it brings citizens' concerns from the backburner to the fore. A mechanism whereby government's mid-course correction can be possible. Four such Citizens' Interfaces have been successfully held since 2005 in Bangalore, Rajasthan, Orissa and Pondicherry.** Over 70 MPs/MLAs have participated in the round tables. In the current Parliament, around 10% have been part of the activities. Over 100 media, 80 eminent citizens/NGOs and 22 MPs/MLAs have participated in the 4 interfaces in 2 years.

Thus, the Governed and the Citizen are together forging a platform for interface "**on solutions to the new challenges that coalition democracy**

and globalization are throwing up." The 2007 interfaces which were held in Orissa and Puducherry have been popular and burgeoned with both MPs and citizens pressuring ICPRD for "a space to participate". **The time of reckoning for the Indian Citizen has indeed come!**

Objectives of the interfaces

- To explore the possible mechanisms to institutionalize Parliamentarians/Legislative/civil society interactions on behalf of the poor/women/vulnerable.
- Assessment by MPs/MLAs and Citizens together on the Current Status of Governance.
- To review the current status of development programmes with relevance to progress, innovation, outcomes and challenges.

At the Orissa Citizens' Interface (April 2007), the Mayor of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Mr. Mihir Mohanty, held an inefficient bureaucracy as one of the biggest hindrances for development in Orissa, terming the bureaucracy as a "burden inherited from the British". Mrs. Kamalini, Chairperson, State Women's Commission, Puducherry, in the Puducherry interface observed that the talent of women should be tapped for the overall development of society. She was of the view that empowering women would go a long way in promoting social justice and harmony. Mrs. Sayee Kumari, President, Puducherry Women's Conference, in the Puducherry interface opined

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Citizens' Interface - 2007**
- **Public Expenditure and Investment on Women: Outcomes in Bihar? - Nandini Azad**
- **Trailblazing Micro-finance Movement of Tribal Women in Jharkhand - Preventing Agricultural Distress and Stemming Naxalism**
- **Social Audit of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in Jharkhand**
- **ABOUT US**

that muscle, money power and male domination prevent women from taking active part in politics. Mrs Namita Panda, Chairperson, State Commission on Women, Orissa in the Orissa interface spoke on the impact of natural disasters on women, emphasizing that women were usually the worst sufferers during and after a natural calamity. **Ch. Lal Singh, MP from Jammu and Kashmir (INC)** in the Bangalore interface 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.



Citizens' interface with MPs/MLAs at Puducherry, April 2007. Seen are participants representing a broad spectrum of society: Civil Society, NGOs, Government officials, Intellectuals and Media alongwith visiting MPs/MLAs.

Outcomes

At the **Jaipur Interface**, **Mr. R. K. Poddar from Confederation of Indian Industry (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 it's funds are not reaching desired outcomes? 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.”

Evolving Interfaces

The Pondicherry interface was a maturing of the citizens' mechanism into a real interface. **The sitting Lok Sabha MP, Shri M. Ramadass, Rajya Sabha MPs Shri V. Narayansamy and Smt. Prema Cariappa, Leader of Opposition, and four parties were represented.** A citizen decried that while MPs discussed issues with fervour differently from varied political standpoints in the

day time, did they **become partners vs citizens?** An interesting intervention was the request for a Senior Citizens' Home for which the sitting Lok Sabha MP agreed to pay for the building, if they had the land. On the devolution of Panchayats, the issue was very clear. **The third tier had been denied a constitutional right in spite of having been elected with powers/resources as the MLAs felt that they would lose the above (Pondicherry having tiny constituencies) due to conflict of interest.** **The Rajya Sabha MP from the Congress agreed alongwith the other MPs to take it up with the Union Panchayati Raj Minister.** On sex tourism which was growing, the women activists had an effective interface with the MPs, who agreed to speak to the senior police officials and the GOI for resources for **rehabilitation of trafficked women.** During deliberations the point was brought out that Government needs to have greater consultative process with other parties/MPs, State Citizens in all departments on major issues (ports/tsunami rehabilitation/satellite towns etc.). **Mr. Auro Filio, CEO of the Crafts and Associates Pondicherry Action Network** observed that “Port Development programme should be considered only after studying the outcomes, strength, opportunities and threats of the project.”



Dr. Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary, ICPRD, speaking at the workshop.

Dr. Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary, ICPRD emphasized that Governance is about citizens' involvement, if we believe “**Governments are by people.**” She added that as a public citizens podium ICPRD interface was different, an interactive platform. **We can express to 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” - interactive and cooperative**



Citizens' interface with MPs/MLAs at Bhubaneswar, Orissa, April 2007. Seen are Shri A. Ravichandran, (MDMK) Lok Sabha MP from Tamilnadu, Dr. Girdhar Gamang, (Congress) Lok Sabha MP from Orissa, Dr. Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary, ICPRD, Smt. Sugnana Kumari Deo, (BJD) MLA from Orissa, Shri Narasingha Mishra, (Congress) MLA and Leader of Opposition in Orissa Assembly, Shri Tathagata Satpathy, (BJD) Lok Sabha MP from Orissa.

effort where we can understand each other better – start communicating, petitioning, caucusing, and using each other. Very rightly, a 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”.

THIRD MPS' EXPOSURE VISIT: REPORT

ICPRD Citizens' Interface at Bhubaneswar, Orissa – April 16, 2007

Issues that emerged for discussion at the Orissa Citizens' Interface were:

- **Industrialization in rural/agrarian society**
- **Women in a transitional society**
- **Governance issues including Challenges of Fifth Schedule areas**

Welcoming the MPs/MLAs, academicians, civil society members, media and others during the third Interface of ICPRD, **Dr Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary, ICPRD** said that the growing marginalization of the poor and other vulnerable sections of the society on development issues necessitates joining of hands of both MPs and Citizens for good governance such as politicians, media, public and civil Society to strengthen democracy.

Stating that poverty reduction continued to be a political challenge in India, Dr Azad said that all efforts should be made to make the lives of the vulnerable, bearable. Like Orissa, various other states like Jharkhand, Bihar, and West Bengal etc. are facing similar problems like Naxalism, poverty, gender-

based violence etc., she said. **She concluded by stating that the expected outcome of the discussion was to chalk out development solutions and strategy, which are enforceable; and make Governance accountable to the poor and citizens.**

The Meeting of Minds: Morning Session

Eminent citizens representing a wide spectrum of society - media, social sciences, government, presented their views on various governance issues in the state of Orissa.

Mr. Nageshwar Patnaik,
Economic Times, Bhubaneswar

Orissa: A State of Paradoxes?

‘Though Orissa is rich in all kinds of resources, yet it remains one the poorest of the country. Though Orissa topped the growth rate at 8.5% in the year 2004-05, higher than the national average of 8%, the number of people below the poverty line (BPL) is the highest in the State. Despite Orissa having the richest mineral resources in the country only 1% of its resources are presently being used!’

Mr. N. Patnaik
Economic Times

Mr. Nageshwar Patnaik stated that the Government had failed to formulate an **appropriate Natural Resources Management policy**. According to him, though the State Government has been propagating the mantra of industrialization in the recent years, it has been neglecting the agricultural sector where the compound growth rate is negative. A special agricultural policy needs to be adopted here too, he stated. Although four-lakh crore investments has been proposed in Orissa so far, yet mega investment projects have been meeting stiff resistance, said Mr. Patnaik, mostly because the affected people have never been considered as equity holders in their own land.

The State has also failed miserably to use technology required for agriculture. Modern Technology can have a tremendous impact on forestry, food processing and other allied industry in Orissa. Value addition can be easily done to agriculture products by introducing the latest technology. The environment and human rights issues have also been neglected, Mr. Patnaik added.

He concluded by saying that a paradigm shift in the development approach is needed for a state like Orissa to prosper, despite being endowed with abundant natural resources.

Tribal Development in Orissa : A Synoptic View
Prof. L. Mahapatra, former Vice Chancellor and Anthropologist

Prof. L. Mahapatra traced the history of the tribals in Orissa and noted that earlier there was no confrontation between the tribals and non-tribal people in Orissa. However, due to “non-governance and mis-governance,” one finds the tribal-non-tribal juxtaposition since the colonial times.

No Safeguards for Tribal Displacees

‘Neither the government - nor the bureaucracy implement the very principles they have devised for safeguarding the interest of the tribal displacees. For example, the declared 2000 policy of bestowing ownership of land rights in 5th Schedule areas and sub-plan areas up to 30 slope of the hill would benefit the tribal displacees. However, these rights have not been given as the revenue settlement rules had not been finalized and implemented even in 2005.’

Prof. L. K. Mahapatra

Former Vice Chancellor and Anthropologist

Most of the anomalies could be sorted out either by instituting fast courts or Gram Nayalayas as provided in the Bill passed by the Central Govt. recently which would follow summary legal procedures for criminal and civil cases in tribal areas, he suggested.

Mr. S. B. Mishra, former Chief Secretary of Orissa

Speaking on the national issue of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), **former Chief Secretary of Orissa, Mr. S. B. Mishra** said that since MPs have passed this law, they should also be answerable to the people of its implications.

SEZs: Boon or bane for Industrial Development?

Giving a comparative profile of SEZs in China and in India, Mr. Mishra said that although the Indian SEZs have been modeled after China, they seem a total distortion of the Chinese models. While China has only six massive SEZs with state-of-the-art technology and modern facilities, India has proposals for 765, out of which 17 have been functioning and 234 cases have been cleared, he informed.

It's a free for all kind of situation in India, where industrial houses and builders are competing to own SEZs, he said. While China has six specialized SEZs with modern infrastructure and facilities, in India the location could be anywhere and also could go as low as 10 hectares for IT related ventures. Also, in China the SEZs are a conglomerate of several industries, but in India it is given to single companies, which does not even have the capability to develop infrastructure needed in the areas. Whereas the tax concession in China is for only two years with 50% discount in the next two years, in India there is 100% tax concession for companies for five years and 50% for the next five years.

Mr. S. B. Mishra

Former Chief Secretary, Orissa

Mr. Mishra said that the serious problems associated with land acquisition for SEZs which has been causing human deprivation needs to be debated or discussed by the government before passing the law. He also spoke on the colossal loss of revenue for the state without commensurate benefits due to the formation of uncontrolled SEZs. Mr. Mishra suggested that only a very few, large-sized SEZs with all the modern infrastructure should be allowed by the government at the eastern and western coasts.

Mr. Ashok Das,
senior media person

Elaborating on the importance of media, Mr. Ashok Das said that media has the power to affect everyday life. Besides providing the much required support for large-scale social changes, it also provides information, generates public opinion and creates awareness, he opined. However, with the changing socio-economic scenario, there has been a visible dip in the coverage of development issues in the media.

Media Activism: Shrinking space

‘A survey by an Orissa based NGO, CYSD in 1999, on the coverage of development issues in the print media of the State shows that Oriya dailies gave 4% coverage to development issues. The English media performed even dismally devoting even less than 1% space to development related articles and issues. Media seems to be obsessed with coverage of politics, sports, entertainment, advertisements etc and concentrates on development issues only after a disaster has struck or something drastic

occurs. Dissemination of welfare schemes, impact of a development project etc are seldom given space. Stories need to be covered on a sustained basis to have the desired impact. **When the voices of 40% of India's marginalized sections remain unheard, then how can we talk of their development?'**

Mr. Ashok Das
Senior Media Person, Bhubaneswar

Narrating an example, Mr. Das said that state news and current affairs programmes in the regional channel had to be discontinued due to a policy decision by the Prasar Bharati. Govt. Policies too have an impact on the coverage of development issues. He appealed to the Parliamentarians that media related policies have to be amended and framed in such a way as to promote and encourage the coverage of development programmes.

Status of women in Orissa

Mrs Namita Panda, Chairperson, State Commission on Women, Orissa

Giving an overview of the Status of women in Orissa, Mrs. Panda said that literacy, especially of the disadvantaged women, was a prerequisite for their development. Observing that nearly 50% of female population in Orissa were illiterate, Mrs. Panda said that the literacy rate was even less than 21% in backward districts like Nawrangpur, Malkangiri etc. Speaking on the impact of natural disasters on women, Mrs. Panda said that women were usually the worst sufferers during and after a natural calamity. Poor access to information, rise in vulnerability to sexual crime, exploitation and lack of space make their position more vulnerable, she observed. However, development has to be customized for women living in interior and tribal areas in their own cultural context, she reiterated, adding that such women should not feel alienated and receive education in their own language.

Development & Displacement: An alternative model

Mr. Balaji Pandey, Director, Institute of Socio-Economic Development (ISED)

Mr. Pandey spoke on his research experiences spanning a decade on displaced people due to industrialization. Stating that a sensitive and pro-people system was highly required to look into the Resettlement & Rehabilitation (R&R) policy, Mr. Pandey said that the state should not continue being oblivious to the people's problems and the ground realities. Based on his

experiences and research on displaced people in 14 development projects in Orissa, he said that none of the promises made by the government to the affected people in providing education, employment, health, drinking water facilities etc have been fulfilled. If the present problems of the affected people are not rectified, it will result in a bigger crisis.

Mr. Balaji Pandey
Director, ISED

Orissa was not the only state where people have lost faith and trust in the state, Mr. Pandey continued. **Displacees throughout the country seem to have little faith in government's rehab measures.** Lamenting the lack of genuine and authentic information, Mr. Pandey said no information on the impact of mining and other industrialization process exists, based on which policies can be formulated in the future. It's high time that the impact has to be assessed and the data needs to be monitored.

Babudom and development bottlenecks in Orissa

Mr. Mihir Mohanty, Mayor, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC)

An inefficient bureaucracy is one of the biggest hindrances for development in Orissa. The bureaucracy is a "burden inherited from the British". Instead of changing with the times, the administration is proving to be one of the biggest bottlenecks in the development process, said Mr. Mihir Mohanty.

He accused administrators of having an upper hand and not providing adequate support to political representatives. Speaking further on administrative reforms, Mr. Mohanty suggested the following:

- He suggested the practice of appointing professionals in top jobs rather than senior bureaucrats, so that a healthy competition prevails and desired results can be achieved.
- "Reform, perform or perish" was the message given by Mr. Mohanty for the inefficient bureaucracy. Education and training of bureaucrats is highly necessary, he said.
- Centers of good governance where bureaucrats can be trained should be promoted.

- Reduction in red tapism, accountability etc should also be propagated among the bureaucrats, failing which they would be taken to task.
- Besides, the proactive role of civil society organizations and the creation of an urban cadre, media activism in critically analyzing the inefficient bureaucrats is also important.

Mr. Mihir Mohanty
Mayor, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation

Adivasi Rights: Literacy movement in KBK districts

Mr. B. B. Patnaik, eminent Oriya writer

Speaking on the literacy movement among tribal women, **Mr. B. B. Patnaik** said that despite several attempts by the govt. and the civil society, a large number of Adivasi or tribal women continue to remain illiterate. Emphasizing the role of education in development, he said that in Bolangir district nearly 4000 nominations papers from women were rejected because the applicants were not literate. As a suggestion, he proposed an appropriate method for frequently used tribal words to be integrated in the mainstream Oriya language so that it can be perceived better by the tribals. He concluded by saying that none of the development policies can be successfully implemented unless people are educated.

Politics of Development in Orissa

Mr. Prafulla Das, The Hindu, Bhubaneswar

Mr. Das remarked that it was unfair to say that the media was only responsible for highlighting development issues, because it is not their responsibility alone. Moreover, the media has its own constraints and compulsions which is hardly debated, he said. Adding that rather than holding the media accountable, the role of government should be critically analyzed. Mr. Das said that though 45 MOUs have been signed for steel plants so far in Orissa, of which 20 have started production, yet no guidelines or policy framework has been prepared by the government. A separate R&R Directorate is yet to be established despite the government's assurance, he added.

Administrators, who are at the helm of development projects, need to be called to such interfaces and be answerable to the citizens for the failure of govt. programmes.

Mr. Prafulla Das
The Hindu, Bhubaneswar

Response of MPs/MLAs

Dr. Giridhar Gamang, Ex-Chief Minister of Orissa and MP: He had the following solutions to offer

- The Government, bureaucracy and the people are all parts of a whole. Their role should be complementary.
- Displacement and growth should not be conflicting, a single line administrative structure needs to be promoted.
- Politics is the "administration of principles," and not pursuing one's own interest and agenda.
- It's significant for politicians to understand that whatever they do should be acceptable to the people. Being elected is not the most important thing, being accepted is.
- Escapism, blaming each other and shifting responsibility - have become the norm. But instead of pointing fingers at each other, we must debate on the solutions. It's important to know to whom the recommendations of the interface shall be sent to make it more effective.

Mr. Tathagata Satpathy, MP:

Mr. Satpathy declared that the forest cover has depleted in a large way and has come down from 40% to 13% in Orissa, he informed. We do not want a repetition of South American and African experience where the societies have become disturbed, completely robbed of their natural resources, he added. Mr. Satpathy endorsed for a natural resource policy in Orissa. But it's important to know who would draft the policy, recruit the officials and implement it.

Mr. Narasingha Mishra, MLA, Orissa, Dy. leader of CLP

As a political representative of Bolangir district from the KBK area, one of the poorest in the country, Mr. Mishra apprised the participants about the numerous socio-economic problems afflicting the marginalized districts of Orissa.

How can we think of the development of the state when people from eight districts in Orissa do not live like humans and where starvation deaths, husbands mortgaging their wives, mothers selling their children still occur, he questioned. Displaced people have always been overlooked. People displaced in the Hirakud Dam Project are yet to be rehabilitated,

said Mr. Mishra. People seem to have lost faith in democracy and when frustrated people take to violence or agitate. A new beginning is needed. In a democracy, it is the people's representatives who have to be answerable to the people and not the bureaucrats, opined Mr. Mishra.

**Mr. Narasingha Mishra
MLA, Orissa, Dy. Leader of CLP**

He concluded by saying that the complete overhaul of the present system was needed and that before anything can be constructed, something has to be destroyed.

Mrs. Sugnana Kumari Deo, MLA

She said that the lack of basic infrastructure in the KBK areas in Orissa prevented people from serving and investing there. Hence, the government should first develop basic infrastructure for both the citizens and the government officials. Besides, development of agriculture is the need of the hour in Orissa, she opined. Various loopholes in the wage structure for daily labourers should be looked at, and farm labourers should be given adequate wages. She also advocated the formation of Farmers' Clubs in Orissa so that farmers be given due importance and support. **She ended on a positive note saying that the potential for development in Orissa is indeed high. However, alongwith the govt. the people themselves should take charge, she said giving successful examples of her own constituency in Khallikote.**

Mr. A. Ravichandran, MP

The young MDMK MP from Tamilnadu, expressed his failure in not being able to comprehend the reason behind Orissa's underdevelopment despite being endowed with rich natural resources like minerals, water etc. The key lies in framing a proper natural resource management policy and utilizing the natural wealth, he proposed. Speaking on administrative reforms, he said that management of administrators was crucial for development of a state firmly and with accountability.

Mr. Ravichandran advocated the following suggestions:

- Development without a human face is bound to create aggression among the people. Hence, all development programmes should be framed keeping the people's interest in mind, he said. Social leadership is also important.
- Development of agriculture is critical to the progress of Orissa.

- Innovative models of development have to be developed rather than aping other models.
- **Bureaucracy is only an instrument in the hands of political leadership who are akin to artisans.** Hence, it's up to the political leaders to utilize the expertise of bureaucrats effectively. But the administrators have to move with the times and not be rigid in their way of functioning.

**Mr. A. Ravichandran
MP, MDMK, Tamilnadu**

Discussions

Post presentations and comments from the Parliamentarians and legislators, the interface witnessed some interesting discussions and debate. Some of the observations made by the participants are:

- Why large projects in Orissa are being met with resistance? Mostly because grassroots politics in Orissa has failed and political representatives have been unable to convince the people and develop a consensus.
- Administrative reforms are required but so also is social leadership where politicians identify the problems of the people and are accepted by them.
- The Citizens of Orissa, media and the intelligentsia have to be more vocal. No enlightened middle class or academician or a very vocal media in Orissa seems available. In spite of economic reforms, poverty has not been reduced in Orissa. Out of the 531 mining leases, hardly 1-5% Oriyas have a stake in it. A vibrant media and public should highlight and protest against such issues.
- Despite discussions and debates, laws are passed or not passed. People are not informed about their benefits or repercussions. But it's up to the political representatives of that area to inform the people.
- The quality of discussions and decorum of political leaders has gone down very much in the Parliament and Assembly. Often, people do not have respect for political representatives. Politicians have now to win back the people's respect, trust and confidence.
- Politicians and media are all mirrors of society and reflect the trends.
- How long we can describe Orissa as a state of

poverty among plenty? How can there be industrialization without displacement? Ensure the participation of people and win their confidence and be transparent. Forceful imposition creates resistance among people. There should not be any resistance or hesitation to talk to the people on the part of the Government.

- **Why do people's representative fear to be charge sheeted while protecting their own people?** The Political culture of Orissa doesn't allow it: neither are people willing to take it as a mass movement. People look up to the leaders but if leaders express their helplessness, what can people do? If you are representing the people, then it's up to you to take it to the people. (observed to MPs/MLAs).
- Interface is required but not political overtones. Identify the shortfalls and solutions rather than blaming each other. Convert ideas into actions.



Citizens' interface with MPs/MLAs at Orissa, April 2007. Seen are participants representing a broad spectrum of society: Civil Society, NGOs, Government officials, Intellectuals and Media alongwith visiting MPs/MLAs.

Voices from the Ground: Afternoon Session

In the afternoon session, Civil Society and NGO representatives gave an overview of the social problems of the state.

Social Movements in Orissa: An overview

Prof. S. S. Singh, Xavier Institute of Management

Narrating several instances, Prof. Singh brought to light how the "so-called development projects" in certain areas have severely neglected the people of that area and provided prosperity to the elite population living elsewhere.

Narrating the experience of an elderly woman, Prof. Singh said: *"In the 60s' when Pandit Nehru was inaugurating the DVC Mathan Dam in present-day Jharkhand, there was a huge*

gathering of tribals & he told them that these dams are "the temples of modern India". He also invited a tribal woman from the gathering to inaugurate the dam. After thirty years of the inauguration of DVC dam, that woman has a photograph with Pandit Nehru in her home, but she has not a single bulb of electricity while the DVC power is being supplied to West Bengal, Bihar and other parts of India!"

"The Pipervara Kuleri in Jharkhand supplied power to the people of Delhi, but the people who were displaced from Pipervara Kuleri are beggars in the streets of Ranchi," he remarked.

Prof. S. S. Singh
Xavier Institute of Management
Bhubaneswar

"Those who have been displaced due to the development efforts, the majority of them i.e. 40% of the displaced persons are in big cities of India," he added. Thus development must not lead to deprivation and displacement. Deprivation is a better term for the word displacement," emphasized Prof. Singh.

He also gave a historical overview of the social movements in Orissa. The problem is that these activists, action groups, NGOs or say non-profit groups who are with the people are effective at the micro level but not often at macro level, he felt. Besides these, the status factor also plays an important role. Once these NGOs assume the character of elitist groups, they no more associate themselves with the people's problems and show little interest to come with the people's issues to the fore-front.

Health Status of Orissa, including marginalized sections like poor and tribals

Dr. Almash Ali, Senior Advisor, Population Foundation of India

He began by saying that the health status of a country is a reflection of the prevalent socio-economic condition and is influenced by a variety of factors like the level of income, sanitation, water supply, nutrition, education etc. It's also affected by coverage, access, affordability and accessibility of basic health services, he added. Giving a summary of the health status of the population in Orissa, he informed that perhaps in no other state in the country it is as adversely

and lowly placed as that of Orissa in the context of development. They are the poorest in the country (with 39% people below BPL), and the most vulnerable sections are women, SCs/STs, landless and marginalized farmers, artisans and marine fisher folk. He attributed the poor health status of the people of Orissa to income and human poverty, social deprivation, structural inequalities in terms of class, caste and sex etc. Other causes of ill health are low levels of education, less investment in health and education sector etc. Dr. Almash Ali emphasized on three aspects of health: Mortality, malaria, and malnutrition. While the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) - at 75/1000 lives births - and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) are among the highest in the country, over one-third children are malnourished, he said adding that morbidity has its roots in communicable diseases in the whole population. The health problems in Orissa are mostly due to the broad horizontal spectrum of poverty and socio eco inequities which needs to be addressed urgently and holistically, he suggested.

Human Rights: Missing persons in Orissa

Mr. Shanti Ranjan Behera, Centre for Democracy and Human Rights

The White paper on Disappearance was tabled in the Orissa Legislative Assembly in 2006, which revealed that 2984 children and women were missing in Orissa during 2004 and 2005, Mr. Behera informed the Round Table. In India, 40,000 children are missing every year in the country and in Delhi alone, the number is 9,000 per year, he added. Presenting a comparative picture, he said that in J&K about 5000-7000 people are reported missing today.

Forest Resources

Mr. B. L. Mohanta, Centre for Regional Education, Forest and Tourism Development Agency

Giving an overview of the forest resources in Orissa, Mr. Mohanta said that the state has 43% land mass and forests out of which 17 % is covered with dense forests. It's rich in floral diversity and has several rare and endangered species in fauna. However, there seems to be interdepartmental government conflict with regard to the collection of forest produce, which creates problems, he stated. The mafia, many a time, illegally collect the forest produce and the absence of government regulation, control and uniform policy further

complicates the matter of collection and sale of forest resources in Orissa. Proper management, collection and sale of forest resource could result in better revenue. Instances of conflict between animals and humans have also been increasing in Orissa, said Mr. Mohanta. Unless and until the participation of the people in conserving the flora and fauna is ensured, preserving the rich natural diversity of Orissa would not be easy.

Gender in Development in Orissa

Mrs. Shashi Behra, SODA

Speaking about the development of women in India, Mrs. Behera said that it's unfortunate that the National Women's Reservation in Parliament Bill has not been passed by the Parliamentarians till now. Though the decision to ensure 33% work for women in employment policies like the NREGA Scheme existed, in reality however very few women were able to utilize it to their advantage, she said. In Orissa, for eg., it was found that women were unable to work through the Scheme because the working conditions were not conducive, she revealed. She added that the absence of any creche in the work area was another issue. Also a majority of marginalized women were unaware of the provisions under various government schemes. Irregular and low wage structure also exist. With regard to health and education sector too, women are not considered as equal partners in development, rued Mrs. Behra.

Child labour in Orissa

Mr. Ranjan Mohanty, Secretary, PECUC

Mr. Mohanty opined that though child labour is linked with poverty, poor education system etc., he said that there was an urgent need to review the various laws with regard to child labour, especially the Child Labour, Prohibition and Regulation Act. (CLPRA) since there were many ambiguities. Education is a prerequisite to solve the problem of child labour. Even though Right to education from 6-14 years exists, unfortunately there is no central legislation. Terming it as a vital issue, which should not get lost, he urged the Parliamentarians to follow it urgently. With regard to Orissa, the state was one of the first to declare a committee that started to spend a certain amount of resources for eradication of child labour, but sadly the present status of the committee is not clear. No strategic action plan exists to rehabilitate child labourers. Enforcement of CLPRA is also very poor in Orissa, he said.

Climate Change in Orissa

Mr. Bimal Pandya, MASS, Sambalpur

In the last 100 years, Orissa has had 91 natural disaster years including floods, cyclones, droughts etc, informed Mr. Pandya. Giving an outline of the climatic changes affecting the state, he said that if the issue remains unaddressed, Orissa would turn into a land of barren mass in 150 years. In 13 years, 8% of the state has turned barren, he stated quoting a government survey and

at this rate Orissa would lose all its agricultural land. Speaking on the effect of climatic changes, he said that the agricultural production of all major crops, except cotton, has been declining in Orissa.

Concluding Remarks - Dr. Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary, ICPRD

After a vibrant and fruitful discussion, Dr. Azad wrapped up the Citizens' Interface by saying that bringing in the Mayor, MLAs and the SCW Chairperson along with MPs, media persons and

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NEWS 11

Turning MPs into social activists

Exposure visits for people's representatives across the country

Sunny Sebastian

JAIPUR: Some of the initiatives taken by the Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development (ICPRD) during 2005 stand out as shining examples of attempts to restore the citizens' faith in democracy. With two "exposure visits" by select Members of Parliament — first to Bangalore and then to Jaipur — ICPRD has shown that people's representatives can well be social activists aspiring to create a better life for the vulnerable sections.

A three-year programme — aimed at enhancing MPs' commitment to development and poverty reduction issues — launched in September this year by ICPRD found four MPs from the north in Bangalore interacting with a cross-section of society. "It was designed as a continuous dialogue between parliamentarians and civil society agencies to interact on and with best practices at the field level through exposure visits," says Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary of ICPRD, the brain behind the initiative.

Bharat Darshan

In November, there were five MPs in Jaipur — three from the south and two from the host State, Rajasthan — discussing the burning issues of the region. On the Bangalore exposure visit, four of the participants were MPs from the north, making it a meaningful "Bharat Darshan".

The exposure visits provided

• Initiative of the Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development

• Four MPs from the north interact with people in Bangalore

• Five MPs discuss burning issues of the region in Jaipur

the MPs with an opportunity to learn about the issues in the States from their Governors. They also joined — sometimes as protagonists — ICPRD's unique National Theatre Workshop for Youth on Gender Violence. Both exposures were highly acclaimed by the MPs and the distinguished guests at the round-tables.

These included eminent personalities such as Alan Nazareth, former Ambassador, and Mohandas Pai of Infosys.

The participating MPs in Bangalore were: Tathagata Satpathy of the Biju Janata Dal from Orissa; Lal Singh of the Congress from Jammu and Kashmir; Kiran Maheshwari of the BJP from Rajasthan; Justice Hanumanthappa of the Congress from Karnataka; and Moolchand Meena of the Congress from Rajasthan.

Those who interacted with the group included Samuel Paul, Chairman of Public Affairs Centre, Clinton De Souza from the Alternative Law Forum, Vijay Kumar from the National Law School, Narendra Panl, senior editor of *The Economic Times*, and Rajiv Gowda from the Indian Institute of Management.

For the Jaipur round, the participating MPs were Jamuna Devi Barupal of the Congress (Rajasthan), Chandra Sekhar Reddy of the Telugu Desam Party (Andhra Pradesh), Girish Kumar Sanghi of the Congress from Andhra Pradesh and Anand Kumar Hegde of the BJP from Karnataka, besides Kiran Maheshwari from the host State. Among others they interacted with Surjit Singh and Pradip Bhargava from the Institute of Development Studies, Sudhir Verma of the Institute of Social Policy Research, Barun Kanjilal of the Indian Institute of Health Management and Research, Chandra Kant Naidu, Resident Editor of *Hindustan Times*, Jaipur, besides activists in water and environment sectors M. Mehta and Harsh Vardhan.

Dialogue on governance

The round-tables, "Meeting of Minds", brought together multi-stakeholders and policy-makers for an advocacy dialogue on governance, public affairs, urban development and innovations, with emphasis on accountability and poverty reduction.

In Bangalore, the round-table highlighted the best practices

available in Karnataka in terms of innovative advocacy at the city level.

The main debate emerged around Information Technology taking over governance or governance supporting IT initiatives. In Jaipur it was more of the basics — drinking water, fighting social evils (girl child discrimination, Dalit atrocities, child marriage), farmers' issues, health security and drought proofing.

Caucus for development

Dr. Nazareth, who congratulated Dr. Azad on initiating a "caucus for development issues in Parliament", said the pains revived the memories of Mahatma Gandhi.

"India seems to be shining only in the cities, and there has been little development in rural areas," he said.

"We may dream of a global village. We must think globally but act locally," Mr. Hegde said.

Seen as path-breaker

The MPs, who acknowledged their predilections in public life with the requirement of fulfilling populist demands from the electorate, said the initiative would serve as a path-breaker. Some of them were forthcoming on their shortcomings.

"The present level of debate in Parliament is not up to the mark, and political reasons are to be blamed for this. There is hardly any time left after walk-outs and dharnas," Mr. Reddy said.

eminent citizens of Orissa was indeed very useful. She opined that the Bhubaneswar Interface had been the most exciting of the three interfaces held so far yet by ICPRD. Dr. Azad summarized salient issues of the deliberations as follows:

- Historical background indicates tribals and non-tribals' peaceful co-existence. But at present, conflict is arising due to the "erosion of tribal space".
- Eight per cent growth rate in Orissa, yet afflicted by one of the highest poverty rate of the country.
- Development of agriculture and farmers in Orissa is a necessity at present. Formation of Farmers' Clubs are essential.
- Creation of a policy on natural resources management and environment is vital.
- Are tribals partners/equity holders in the process of industrial development? Genuine data needs to come in.
- Administrative reforms are needed for better governance, as catch phrase by one of the participants, "Reform, perform or perish."
- Poverty monitoring and assessment is vital to analyze the impact of poverty reduction schemes and programmes.
- Deliberating on comparative profiles of different regions is useful.
- Legislators should bring in norms in Prasar Bharti to encourage coverage of development related stories.

Dr. Azad added that it was significant that the interface at an individual level brought together several important persons on to a common platform in this whole campaign for poverty reduction and better governance.

Concluding the third exposure visit on building a network of parliamentarians/Legislators/Civil Society for development, **Dr. Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary, ICPRD**, conveyed her gratitude and thanks to all the Parliamentarians, Legislators, media persons, NGOs and speakers for participating in the interface. She suggested the formation of a **caucus of Governance** where one could express and share inputs with each other. She also conveyed a special thanks to all the MLAs of Orissa who highlighted several cutting edge issues of the state during the round table as well as the Hon. MPs.

Investment on Women

Public Expenditure and Investment on Women: Outcomes in Bihar?

*Nandini Azad,
March 21, 2007*

Globalization implies the play of market forces and commerce and is characterized by the withdrawal of the State from being a major player in the economy to that of a facilitator, allowing market forces to operate. The phenomenon can be viewed both as an opportunity for poor women as well as one having adverse impact (inflation, kerosene, credit rate, energy, VAT, PDS etc.), depending on the framework conditions and social safety nets available.

The effect of globalization on poor women is termed by NGO activists in the following manner—"with little other possibilities, the only way to trigger poverty reduction efforts is to enhance women's rights to entitlements through community based efforts. SHGs seem the mechanism to share these responsibilities in this context (withdrawal of subsidies etc.) utilizing "self help" as the catch word. SHGs (Self Help Groups) are really often units of privatization at the grassroots delivering credit / health / education / social security services, etc. Current studies indicate that without targeted "empowerment inputs" i.e. gender based awareness raising, SHGs can at best function merely as credit/savings groups.

Pre-entry capital discrimination is a severe and continuous phenomenon leading to gender based segmentation of the labour markets in India. Poor women seem to have little possibilities for mobility into the formal sector. Given lack of targeted investment on women and specified outcomes, the informal sector is thus where they are moving into large numbers – working as marginal workers (indicating an increasing incidence of feminized poverty). Any possible increases into the formal sector seem well nigh impossible without targeted

¹Keynote address delivered at the 'Women's Empowerment and Globalization: Challenges for the 21st Century', held on 17-18th March, 2007 at T.N.B. College, Bhagalpur.

²Co-organized by ICPRD/ T.N.B. College, Bhagalpur

³151 participants participated in the two-day workshop which included Resource persons, Social activists, Economists, Academicians, University representatives and ICPRD staff.

skill formation or packages to enhance upward the 'magic' figure of 12% women in the formal sector (for several decades now). **Without breaking this impasse, increased growth may well marginalize poor women's employment, if appropriate security nets are not in place (as the NCUI has emphasized recently).**

The long flogged feminization of poverty in India does not seem to transform itself into "**gender inclusive growth**". The 11th Plan's call for "**gender balancing**" needs to be viewed in the context of the steady decline of sex ratio in the so-called developed States, calling for immediate review of macro policies. **Gender needs not only to be balanced but "invested" on.** This needs to be adequately attended to in the specific sectoral chapters of the above plan, indicating that the 9% growth may indeed bypass women or women will fail to benefit from it (as before) or it may even affect them (and the poor) adversely in several spheres. Illustrations of lack of social safety nets leading to conflict and violence during SAP are available in Bihar, with the BPL and APL protesting. "The poor in Bihar are protesting against their names being struck off the BPL list (Begusarai district), depriving them of benefits under a host of poverty-alleviation schemes. Among the Above Poverty Line families (APL) the anger against the new PDS system of coupons is equally palpable (Patna district). It cuts by half their access to what's among the most precious commodities in a perennially power-starved State: cheap kerosene". (Indian Express dated March 20, 2007).

BIHAR

In the case of **Bihar** as per the national consultation title – it would be useful to examine the macro picture before deciding whether "**globalization or women's empowerment**" in the current scenario, can be real possibilities. I submit few macro level indicators on Bihar before you:

- Every 8th Indian is from Bihar (out of Bihar, it seems their work performance is positively different).
- Per capita (Rs. 5445) is 1/4th that of Indian average (Rs. 17,8233 – (2001 census).
- Rural poverty ratio is 43% while India is 23%.
- Literacy for women is 33% while male is 60.5%.

- It ranks last in HDI indicators (15th).

Though statistics all seem to challenge the development of Bihar, it is clear that there is a historical perspective to the poor agrarian development, including

- Bihar being a permanent settlement area during colonial times (and 1857 mutiny locations) meant discriminatory public investment by colonial powers in these areas. The head start was thus poor compared to other states.
- North Bihar is in the throes of continuous floods due to rivers flooding from Himalayas – (geographic poverty). This also had a significant impact on the agrarian economy.

Gender wise Literacy and Enrolment rates in Bihar merit a serious consideration.

Consider the following:

6-11 yrs - 35% girls are missing from school!
11-14 yrs - 80% girls are missing from school!

North Bihar has the highest amount of illiterates – total of 76.2% illiterate women in Bihar (India's average is 58.2%). Patna district has the highest female literacy (52%) and Kishanganj has the lowest (18.5%). Districts with Muslim/SC population tend to see a drop in literacy.

Sex ratio in Bihar has interesting evidence that indicates that the girl child is indeed born resilient - 923 per 1000 is Bihar's female-male ratio (India is 933). **But in the 0-6 years, Bihar has a better sex ratio than the country average at 938 to 927 respectively.** However the poor social attitudes and conditions are manifest in the fact that life expectancy is 64.8 in Bihar to 65.9 years for India. Though gains in sex ratio do not seem to have been significantly capitalized, IMR in Bihar is also about the Indian average and not very different. **Interestingly, all over Bihar in the last decade (2001 census), sex ratio has improved. Lower percentage of development and growth seem to suggest better sex ratio?? This needs detailed probing in comparison to sex ratio decline, for e.g. in Punjab/Haryana (the economically better developed States).**

Health

Consider the following

- Only 14% hospital or 22% health professional support for delivery of children.

- Only 23% contraceptive use by women (NFHS-II 1998-99).
- Anemia is 60%! for women.

Work and Employment

As far as Gender wise Work Participation Rates, it is serious that while “all female workers”, are increasing in Bihar –‘main female workers are declining’, confirming that females as marginal workers are increasing and form the large pool of rural informal sector. Male WPR rate have also consequently declined. Migrant men leave in search of work leaving behind de facto female headed households (FHH) (30-40%). FHH have higher burden & poverty incidence as is documented elsewhere. Food insecurity, time & asset poverty seems to mark female work pattern (all female headed household typology). Rural casual labour is also highest among women.

Indicators of Women’s Empowerment in Bihar and India

Indicator	Bihar			India
	North	South	All	
Percentage of women heading their own household	7.2	7.7	7.5	10.3
Who do not need permission to go to the market	16.9	15.2	16.0	31.6
Who do not need permission to visit Friends / relatives	16.4	14.4	15.5	24.4
Regularly exposed to at least one mass medium	26.2	27.7	26.9	59.3
Involved in at least one aspect of Household decisions	85.7	81.0	83.3	90.6
Decisions on health care	36.5	48.7	42.6	51.6
With access to cash	73.6	58.6	66.1	59.6

Source: NFHS-II (1998-99)

Share of Women in Different Categories of Posts under PRIs

Caste Categories	Share of Women (%)		
	Members of Gram Panchayat	Members of Panchayat Samiti	Mukhia
Scheduled Castes	44.3	39.1	0.8
Scheduled Tribes	52.0	53.4	2.0
Other Castes/Religions	32.1	32.1	0.9
All Castes/ Religions	36.0	34.9	1.0
No. of Posts	105106	10832	7892

Social or Economic Reform first?

Pre-entry capital discrimination requires women are invested in, for as a major public expenditure. Could women in Bihar currently even integrate into the national systems, before becoming global? (health / education indicators).

Social Reform

Seclusion ideology / patriarchal traditions often do not allow women mobility (caste, class, gender variables intersect to make it more intense in Bihar). Further, dowry can be seen to be the family’s investment on girls / women.

A serious change of the family / male attitudes in investing on girls’ / women’s education seems the real answer to Bihar’s development.

Asset / Time Poverty

Further, land titles need to be in women’s names or use of common property resources. Asset /time poverty need to be dealt with alarming out-migration of males from Bihar and ‘the use of rights’ (to fuel/fodder/water) becoming more difficult (time therefore is in paucity for poor women and more so for FHHs).

Public Expenditure

Approximately 23% of Bihar public expenditure seems on health / education – but the ground level “outcomes” need further examination in the light of the above status. Delivery mechanisms need tightening (i.e. NREGA, MMA, SSA, ICDS). As a tax payer, the citizen in Bihar needs to generate a demand – not expect the state to deliver all goods and services (check if the teacher is on time or PHC doctor at work - citizens need to assert themselves). The patronage and dependence on the government has to move from “a jajmani relationship” (patron - client).

Institutional

A separate Department of Woman & Child is essential. Targeted allocations/investment on female literacy if “she or he is to be part of a integrated global market” is absolutely mandatory.

- Economic opportunities for women have to be in the areas of skill formation, collective action (micro enterprises / groups), credit facilities (SHGs/ thrift), market linkages (design / markets).
- Women in PRI’s need to be strengthened by capacity building. NGOs need to confront Proxies – including political parties. Mere reservation of 50% for women in PRIs is often negated when we look at the figures by a ‘Hunger Project Study’. This indicates that nearly 70% of elected women members in Bihar have spouses/family with criminal records).
- NGOs have to play a greater role advocating with citizens, being consumers’ watch dog and/or develop SHGs in each village (currently only about 20-25,000 SHGs exist in Bihar by rough estimates).

विकास के लिए महिलाओं को खुद आगे आना होगा



टीएनबी कॉलेज में महिलाओं का उद्वेगपूर्ण सम्मेलन 'महिला सशक्तिकरण एवं 21वीं शताब्दी' पर

भागलपुर (वि.प्र.) 17वीं मर्च को महिला सशक्तिकरण और वैश्वीकरण का सुविधा 'विश्व' का टी.एनबी कॉलेज का आयोजित कार्यक्रम में महिलाओं को आमंत्रित किया गया। कार्यक्रम का उद्घाटन विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति डॉ. देव प्रसाद ने किया। उन्होंने कहा कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना ही विकास का रास्ता है। उन्होंने कहा कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना ही विकास का रास्ता है। उन्होंने कहा कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना ही विकास का रास्ता है।

महिला सशक्तिकरण पर दो दिवसीय सेमिनार

महिला सशक्तिकरण पर दो दिवसीय सेमिनार का आयोजन टी.एनबी कॉलेज में किया गया। कार्यक्रम में कुलपति डॉ. देव प्रसाद ने कहा कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना ही विकास का रास्ता है। उन्होंने कहा कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना ही विकास का रास्ता है। उन्होंने कहा कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना ही विकास का रास्ता है।

डॉ. देव प्रसाद ने कहा कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना ही विकास का रास्ता है। उन्होंने कहा कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना ही विकास का रास्ता है। उन्होंने कहा कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना ही विकास का रास्ता है। उन्होंने कहा कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना ही विकास का रास्ता है।

बेटियों को पढ़ाने में खर्च करें दहेज का पैसा : नन्दिनी

सुविधा

पतिव्रता जन्म से जन्म ही बेटियों को पढ़ाने के लिए दहेज का पैसा खर्च करे।



नन्दिनी आजाद ने कहा कि बेटियों को पढ़ाने में दहेज का पैसा खर्च करे।

भागलपुर: देश और दुनिया के लोगों को अधिकतर विचारों के लिए खर्च करने वाली बेटियों को पढ़ाने में दहेज का पैसा खर्च करे। नन्दिनी आजाद ने कहा कि बेटियों को पढ़ाने में दहेज का पैसा खर्च करे। नन्दिनी आजाद ने कहा कि बेटियों को पढ़ाने में दहेज का पैसा खर्च करे।

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Excerpt from 'Hindustan' - 18th March, 2007

Not dowry, Invest on girls' education: Nandini

Bhagalpur: For Dr. Nandini Azad, the well-acclaimed crusader of people's rights in India and abroad, it was a moment of shock and dismay when she learnt of the deplorable situation in Bihar, (the ancestral home of her husband's family), when she came to Bhagalpur to deliver the key-note address for a UGC National Seminar on the 'Women's Empowerment and Globalization – Challenges in the 21st century' organized by the Bhagalpur University. "In ancient times, Bihar was the center of higher learning, she said, but today 81% of its 11-14 year old girls are not enrolled in school. Female literacy in Bihar is a mere 33 per cent and per capita income not even one-third of the national average. " Nandini Azad was here to speak on globalization trends, but seeing the ground reality she felt it more pertinent to address the issue with reference to the development in Bihar. She spoke on several issues concerning this issue with our correspondent on the growth of Bihar with special emphasis on eastern

Bihar and Kosi region. 'One of the greatest proponents of women's freedom a 105 years ago, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee (Devdas, Parineeta), had studied in Bhagalpur University (T.N.B. College) and this was the inspiration for her to accept the invitation of Bhagalpur University', Nandini Azad said. "A feminist pilgrimage", she added. But the Bhagalpur of today was no different from the writings of Sarat Chandra in the 19th century. The women here today are as subjugated as they were in his times. The status of health and education of women here is very low as compared to the rest of the country, she added. Kishanganj, the most backward region of the county in terms of education, is also a part of Bihar (18.5% female literacy). People have to first change their attitudes: the resources invested on dowry for the girl must instead be diverted for her education, she insisted. Once a girl is educated she will be in a position to "be her own dowry" and if required even get a husband for her self, she added. Before speaking on globalization, we need to empower the people here, she said. She suggested that the youth of Bihar should not be dissuaded from working in multi-national Corporations- let their aspirations come true. Only an empowered youth force will change the destiny of Bihar. She suggested further that NGOs be made partners in the development process as they could help in translating government programmers on the ground in terms of "outcomes". She further exhorted the people to stop depending or blaming the government but become equal partners in the development process.

Conclusions

- Social safety nets in Bihar for poor women needs serious review. Women that live in areas of worst forms of poverty require survival packages during SAP.
- Strengthening "the rule of law" is essential for markets to operate - there is a place for politicians/NGOs/academicians and "the market separately". One must allow these to function as independently as possible.
- The 'SHG' can well nigh be a interim social safety net as a transitory measure. The current 25,000 SHGs should be enhanced ten fold considering that around 25 million rural poor women exist in Bihar.
- Campaigns on a war footing through media/indigenous folk forms on "Girl child enrolment" are most vital.
- Capacity building of women in PRIs could also slowly change the mind set. Proxy women candidates have in the past (as documented elsewhere) been "an initial phenomena" and continuous training could well slowly transform pro active engagement of women members (1,00,000 or so).
- Public expenditure and outcomes of public institutions in Bihar need review. The Bihar Task Force in the Planning Commission should be strengthened with resources to engage in a pro-active role.

Trailblazing Micro-Finance Movement of Tribal Women in Jharkhand: Preventing Agricultural Distress and Stemming Naxalism

Introduction

Since 1998 ICPRD has initiated its micro finance advocacy campaign for the poor and tribal women in the remote and backward districts of Jharkhand. ICPRD's intervention in a poor and backward state like Jharkhand is a trailblazer due to the challenges in Jharkhand in terms of HDI reflecting structural poverty, systematic exclusion, social disintegration, amongst poor/marginalized groups such as women, tribals in a caste ridden feudal economy.

Given the severe field conditions in the macro and micro-environment in Jharkhand and Orissa, project intervention to be successful required building up of local tribal capacities (not merely infuse outside inputs) as envisaged and sustained by ICPRD. To build financial systems, which are alien to their informal culture, the process has been extremely challenging. Through initiating Self-Help Groups of poor women in the area and building their capacities through trainings and exposure visits, the ICPRD project has succeeded, to a large degree, in establishing micro finance networks in the project area - a hitherto unserved / backward agricultural area. Also savings/thrift habits and on-lending has been initiated of the savings within groups and through banks (30.03%). NGOs have begun to process system for accessing revolving credit and bank loans.

The intervention strategies devised by ICPRD has been providing a momentum to the micro finance and self help group movement of poor women in Jharkhand and Orissa at the local levels (in Deoghar, Dumka, Godda and Jamtara districts in Jharkhand and Mayurbhanj district in Orissa) ICPRD collaborated and partnered with 15 local NGOs, working in these communities to build local capacities.

Project Environment: Before

Low levels of literacy (even upto 2% for tribal women), extreme poverty and backwardness, lack of road connectivity leading to isolation of the project area, a monolithic feudal system, patriarchy and gender inequity coupled with naxalism – these were the difficulties and challenges that ICPRD had to contend with when it first entered the project area.

The women here were shy of speaking to strangers and communicated through sign language, their faces hidden in veils and could not even sign their own names.

Non-existent or non-functional SHG groups, NGOs not capacitated to handle these groups, very little access of these groups to mainstream banking institutions (banks were either reluctant to give loans to these groups or did so only through middlemen who charged money to do so) was the situation that existed.

Braving these impossible odds, the project has made great strides forward in the two years of its existence and changed the profile of the women of the area and through them, of the community.

On the economic front, the project succeeded in establishing micro finance networks and initiated social entrepreneurship with women advocates striving to establish institutional stability in terms of mobilizing savings/credit towards livelihood promotion in remote, isolated areas. **About 3400 tribal women have access** to credit and have initiated their own income generation activities in agriculture / allied activities through micro-credit. Through 110 self help group members' trainings (3400 members) organized under the project, local capacities have been built: they have imbibed the nuances of financial management, accessing financial resources, familiarizing with financial system and linking them with formal banking institutions.

On the social front, it has emboldened the shy and timid women of the area to take on the entrepreneurship mantle and social problems of their communities; stand up to any kind of injustice and inequity.

Boosting Agriculture Sector

The **project objectives were to strengthen the local level agricultural economy, micro entrepreneurship for processed foods / households items** (from agriculture and allied occupations including animal husbandry, sericulture; micro-enterprises relying on land based activity such as bio-fertilizers / composts and/or alternate employment to boost lean agricultural season employment (puffed rice processing, chick pea flour (i.e. vegetable protein), jaggery or brown sugar substitute; cattle, sheep / goat / pigs / hen rearing, fish farming and so forth). This has helped create small savings / thrift, accumulate capital in hitherto poor agricultural families that have very little alternatives to the moneylenders but to mortgage land in lean seasons to cope with shocks **(young men and women here are so desperate that choices often were either joining civil strife movements (Naxalism) or often, it was discovered, being trafficked for sexual exploitation**

or domestic labour). Further, farmers' families distress is also sought to be prevented by this project that "kept small credit / capital flow ongoing through **developing local informal credit funds out of savings in villages as an alternate credit source.**

ICPRD project in Jharkhand / Orissa supported the local agricultural economy by building local capacity for providing timely micro credit (through 260 self help groups) to manage credit / thrift / savings, interloaning for agricultural purposes, processing with value addition, etc. It also showed **the way that alternate employment can be developed during lean seasons through petty loans** given to women members by SHGs or through on-lending with their savings - **a preventive strategy in India where 1000's of farmers have committed suicide due to indebtedness, coping mechanisms for the poor to absorb shocks and lack of quick credit at non-exploitative terms.**

Developing and institutionalizing effective market strategies

In order to provide an opportunity for tribal hamlets particularly women to integrate by establishing enterprise units in their local tribal belt, ICPRD organized a Mahila Haat or Women's Fair in **Deogarh on 20th September 2006. (also to stem Naxalite influence in the area).**

The Fair helped serve as a platform to establish linkages for capital investment and marketing for the emerging women economic entrepreneurs of the project area.

The highlight of the ICPRD Mahila Haat (Women's Fair) is that thousands of poor tribal women from Santhal Parganas and Orissa (project area), transforming into successful social entrepreneurs after project intervention, gathered at a huge ground in Deogarh



A traditional welcome dance by tribal women at the Mahila Haat (Women's fair), July 2007, Dumka, Jharkhand.

(Jharkhand) in colorful clothes and traditional finery to proudly display their entrepreneurial skills through an array of products. At the same time, the sweep and magnitude of the display helped showcase the sweep and magnitude of the impact the project has had on the lives of the economic and social lives of these women.

Through this fair, participating SHG members have been exposed to:

- A better utilization of skills through interacting with other SHG members.
- Interface with govt. officials/various banks and other civil society organizations.
- Exposed to marketing skills and a better display of products.
- Provided a platform for the emergence of a broader micro-finance federation in the region.
- Stem the tide of Naxalite influence by enhancing economic integration.

The women put up professionally sound stalls at the fair displaying an array of products, such as:

- Vegetables and fruits
- Cakes and doughnuts
- Murhi/Chuda (Processed rice eats/other snacks)
- Kitchen spices/lentils/rice
- Soft toys
- Embroidered bedspreads and pillow covers
- Bamboo items
- Leaf plates
- Decoration items (by tribals)
- Scarfs
- Iron smithery items, etc.

The fair was a success with thousands of people visiting it from near and far. The women were able to earn 30% to 40% higher profits than when they sold their products in the local markets or through middlemen. They were able to establish linkages directly with bulk buyers. Bulk orders were received for embroidered items from the social welfare department. 10% to 15% SHG groups have managed a fixed shop for selling their products. Banks are also more open to providing loans to SHG groups as "Women entrepreneurs' visibility has been enhanced".

"This is a region with immense possibilities for progress. The area is rich with raw materials for cottage industry and handicrafts."

Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD
In her message to the fair



Mahila Haat (Women's fair), September 2006, Deoghar, Jharkhand.

The District Collector of the area, the Chief Guest on the occasion, in his valedictory address equated the income generation activities of SHG group members in the area to cottage industry and agriculture advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, for developing and sustaining village economies.

"We thank ICPRD for giving us an opportunity of visiting the Mahila Haat organized at Deoghar Hindi Vidyapeeth on 20th September, 2006. Women came from far-flung villages with products which they had made with their own hands. It is evident from this that these women have the capacity to take their lives towards progress and prosperity. Nearly 2000 women had gathered here from different institutions in a spirit of goodwill and camaraderie. Seeing all this, we felt that if such a Haat is organized every year, then it will give an opportunity for the SHG groups here to grow and people will become more aware of women's potential."

- A Visitor

"I had the occasion to visit the Mahila Haat organized by ICPRD at Hindi Vidyapeeth, Deoghar on 20th September, 2006....Member-Secretary, ICPRD, Dr. Nandini Azad, is to be applauded for her great contribution in uplifting the poor and tribal women of these states. Such events should continue to be organized."

Chief Secretary
Hindi Vidyapeeth
Deoghar, Jharkhand

Impact of the Project

- The ICPRD project has **systematized the efforts of the NGOs for micro-finance capacity building programmes** by supporting these small organizations in terms of experience of implementing projects through a close networking in Jharkhand and Orissa through Training of Trainers Workshops.
- Acquiring skills that have helped to **inculcate in**

members the proficiency to handle their SHG groups as independent units and decrease their dependency on the facilitating NGOs for their operations through TOTs and SHG members' training.

- **Women have started taking up various economic activities** and through this, the processes of economic planning have been introduced amongst the SHG members through skill development workshops and field and exposure visits. Though a bit hesitant earlier, tribal women have now started to explore more alternate forms of processing and value addition, which can fetch them more profit. This has also lessened stress on agricultural families.
- It has provided a common platform so as to bring in the best practices to impart technical inputs facilitated through exposure and field visits so as to strengthen the efforts of integrating micro finance into the economic cycle of the rural poor.
- The training importantly **enforced self-esteem among the women collectives - SHGs**. They understood that economic units could be very well managed and developed by women themselves despite gender-biased ownership of resources, which characterizes the feudal society in Jharkhand.
- Strengthened leadership; involvement of group in village based conflict resolution, regularity in meetings, attendance, saving and repayment in the groups.
- SHG Members' trainings and TOTs have strengthened the base for loaning towards establishing a micro-finance institution in the coming years.
- Low dependency on moneylenders – (30%) for marriage and death ceremonies. Average size of loan intake was Rs. 100-Rs.7000/-.
- Enhanced levels of enterprise, women's group enterprise activism, lesser overheads, bargaining power, diversification of new business opportunities.
- Enabling a platform for tribal entrepreneurs for practicing and expanding their current enterprises.
- The repayment capability is showing an increase from 50-60% in Phase I to 100% repayment at nominal rates of interest (groups and banks) in Phase II.
- Mobilized women, particularly on gender inequity, gender based violence and their empowerment and resisting these issues including their sensitization regarding malpractices in availing government subsidized schemes and **their active role in assuring standard functioning of Public Distribution System (PDS), government**



schools, health centers, and anganwadi centers.

Forthcoming Mahila Haat (Women’s Fair) - Dumka, July 2007

As a continuation of its on-going effort to provide a platform to establish linkages for capital investment and marketing for rural/tribal women, ICPRD will be organizing a Mahila Haat (Women’s Fair) on ‘Capacity, Leadership, Skill and Entrepreneurship Development among the Rural Women through Micro Savings Programme’ in Dumka, Jharkhand in July 2007. Members from 15 Self Help Groups from three partner NGOs namely Manavi, Rural Tribal Development Foundation and Lok Deep would be participating in this event. In order to disseminate information regarding the fair and ICPRD project in Jharkhand, posters/pamphlets would be distributed in and around Dumka district; the support of local government functionaries, bank officials, University Vice Chancellor/professors, regional and national media and other key stakeholders would be sought through meetings and dialogues.

Conclusion

The ICPRD micro credit programme that covered around **260 SHGs** and **3400 women** in total, has successfully

exposed tribal women in Jharkhand and Orissa collectively at the grassroots about the various avenues of development wherein they could actively participate directly and independently of NGO support in implementation and monitoring of credit programmes. They are ready to build a micro-finance Institution.

Today, these poor and tribal women in the most backward states of India i.e. Jharkhand and Orissa have become a powerful force in their villages in Santhal Parganas and Orissa by capital accumulation at the base: They are:

- Rejuvenating the agricultural, allied economy including strengthening the processing sector.
- Running successful business enterprises.
- Build a grid of grassroots micro-credit delivery mechanism.
- Confronting village problems through a joint struggle.
- Standing for panchayat elections (local self-government).
- Opposing the atrocities of the local moneylenders.
- Filling tenders for government contracts.
- Even making government functionaries accountable!
- Stemming Naxalite influence.

Social Audit of NREGA

Workshop on Foot campaign, Social Audit, Public Hearing, Deliberations Camp, and Human Rights Mass Meeting (Hakdari Maha Sabha) - organized by ICPRD and partner NGOs in Jharkhand.

Background

Continuous Drought, acute hunger conditions and spiraling corruption have brought the deprived communities of the entire Santhal Parganas to the brink of disaster in the last three to four years.

The year before, ten people died of hunger, an issue taken up by the local media and covered extensively in the newspapers.

Regular efforts have been made by the oppressed and exploited Adivasis, Paharias and other Tribal Communities through a collective approach and Gram Sabha Empowerment process for the amelioration of their problems.



A Padyatra (foot campaign) for social audit of NREGA in Jharkhand, October, 2005.

Various events have been organized to highlight the issue:

- In January 2005, a meeting of the co-ordination committee of the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan was called which debated seriously on existing problems and issues and evolved a strategy to resolve them involving Gram Sabhas and community institutions.
- Consequently, a meeting was held in March 2005 of the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan involving Gram Sabhas and community institutions. The consensus arrived at this meeting was to expand the scope of the activities undertaken in the year 2004. It was decided to achieve this through

programmes such as Pad Yatra (Foot Campaign), Social and Public Hearing, Deliberations and Human Rights Campaign.

- It was then planned to have foot campaigns and social Audits in 17 locations covering 6 Districts of Santhal Parganas which would be followed by Public Hearings in the presence of Justice committee and Government officials. Later, a future strategy would be evolved based on the outcomes of these Social Audits and Public hearings through 2 days (29, 30 Oct, 2005), and deliberations participated by 1000 Pradhans (village Heads). This future strategy would be shared with 10, 000 villagers.

Objectives of the Programme:

- Ensure a transparent and accountable administration.
- Access and control of Gram Sabha on Government and Non-Government Programmes.
- Access and control of local resources by Gram Sabhas.
- People's awareness of their constitutional rights, provisions and defined duties.
- Community awareness to ensure the Right to Work, Right to Food, Right to Information and proper implementation of food and social security schemes in the state of Jharkhand.
- Ensure community feeling and solidarity.
- Forming alliances and networks for addressing above issues.

The following tasks were needed to be taken up for the implementation of the mass programme . These include

- Analysis, simplification and publication of legal measures and directives.
- Ensure a widespread understanding and consensus of goals and agenda through Folders, Posters, and Pamphlets.
- Preparing and training a cultural team to create a public opinion on goals and objectives.
- Training for Social Audit.
- Thematic discussions with federation leaders and gram sabha members.
- Regional meetings of coalition networks.
- Preparation and presentation of detailed budgets.
- Formation of a preparatory committee for organizing the Mass Meeting.

Preparatory Process:

A Pre-conference meeting was organized by the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan and related community institutions to

plan the tentative agenda, Programme schedule and related budgets.

Gram Sabhas and village Community institutions assumed responsibility for their own regional Programmes. As it was found necessary that a training, particularly on Social Audit of food for work Programme, Social Security Programmes and also on disability related programme should be done including the training of the culture team, a 3-day training programme was organized from 1st to 3rd September, 2005 which was attended by 125 Participants of Gram Sabhas. In order to monitor and co-ordinate all the social audit Programmes and Public hearings at different locations with their follow ups, a team was formed of 5 NGO leaders. The task of designing of posters / pamphlets / videography was responsibilities of other leaders.

A Committee was formed to organize and guide the Human Rights Mass Meeting, which was named as Santhal Parganas Hakdari Sabha.

Detailed Program:

The following is the detailed Programme Schedule of Foot Campaigns and Social Audits at 17 Locations in 6 Districts of Santhal Parganas.

14 – 30 October, 2005

District	Sanstha	Block	Foot Campaigning Date	Public Hearing Date	Agenda Food for Work Programme
	Astha Mahila Sangh	Saraiyahat	14-20 Oct, 05	21 Oct, 05	Food for Work Program
Dumka	Chand Vairabh Adiwasi Swasasan Samitee	Jama	14 – 20 Oct,05	21 Oct, 05	Do Angan Bari
	Manghi Baisi	Boarjor	14-20 Oct, 05	21 Oct, 05	Do
Godda	Atu Baisi Swasasan Samitee	Telo	16-21 Oct, 05	22 Oct, 05	Do
	Dosti	Pathargama	17-23 Oct, 05	24 Oct, 05	Do + PDS
	Lohiya Viklang Samitee	Sundarpahar	18-24 Oct, 05	25 Oct, 05	PWD Act
	Majdoor Kisan Samitee	Poraiyahat	15-21 Oct, 05	22 Oct, 05	Food for Work Programme
	Aman Manjhi Baisi	Maheshpur	15-21 Oct, 05	22 Oct, 05	Do +PDS
Pakur	Aman Samay Kalaya	Pakurh	15-21 Oct, 05	22 Oct, 05	Do
	Manjhi Pargana Sardar Sabha	Dharampur (Litiparha)	17-23 Oct, 05	24 Oct, 05	Do
Sahibganj	Swaraj Kendra	Borio	14-20 Oct, 05	21 Oct, 05	PDS + Angan Bari
	Friends Club	Bario	17-23 Oct, 05	24 Oct, 05	Food for work Programme
	Gram Sabha Pabiya	Narayanpur	15-21 Oct, 05	22 Oct, 05	Do
Deoghar	Gram Sabha	Kundhit	18-24 Oct, 05	25 Oct, 05	Do
	Gram Sabha	Sanwa	17-23 Oct, 05	24 Oct, 05	PDS
	Majdoor Kisan Sanghathan	Mohanpur	18-24 Oct, 05	25 Oct, 05	PDS

Workshop Implementation:

As planned, a foot campaign was organized in all the 6 Districts of Santhal Parganas from 14 – 25 October, 2005 and it was followed by Social audits by the local populace of programmes (Social Security Programme, which includes Anantodaya Annapoorna Programme, Lal Card), Food for Work Programme, and Public Distribution System. At five locations, PDS irregularities and at 10 locations the food for work Programmes were taken as the main focus for Social audits. After the Social audits, Public hearings were organized on fixed dates to listen to the grievances of the poor tribals and the problems faced by them in the presence of concerned government officials. The government officials failed to appear on the appointed day or even provide the desired information relating to programmes. A Justice committee was formed to deal with the related issues and for formulating future strategies, 1000 Pradhans (Village Heads) were invited from different locations to gather at Hijla Maidan, Dumka for two days (28-29 October, 2005).

On October 28, around 60 Village Heads gathered at Dumka Mr. Michel Tadoo, co-ordinator of the Mass Meeting, requested the present Village Heads to identify the problems of their districts that emerged at the social audits so that a strategy could be evolved to address them and openly discussed on the day of the Mass Meeting.

Thereafter, the Village Heads discussed the individual problems of their respective districts. At 5.00 pm of October 29, all village heads gathered in the main hall and put forward the problems of their respective districts along with the suggested strategies to address them.

The following were the common issues that emerged:

Public Distribution System (Antyodaya, Lal Card, Annapurna Scheme)

- No Food grain available on Lal Card.
- Antyodaya card holders do not get the exact quantity of ration at rates fixed by the government or at regular periods.
- The dealer making wrong entries on Card.
- The dealer forcibly keeping the cards with himself.
- No fixed time schedules of opening and closing of ration shops.

- No Information regarding how much food grain is sanctioned to a particular ration shop and number of card holders availing the given amount.
- Beneficiaries of cards are illegally selected by the Govt. bodies and not by the Gram Sabhas, based on their informal nexus.
- All Pahari communities are deprived of these card facilities.
- Distribution of poor quality of rations.

Food for work Programme

- Negligence in selection of programme.
- No involvement of village communities in regulating and monitoring at State, District and Panchayat level in Govt. Programmes.
- No public disclosure of the projected budget, related amount expended and employment generated.
- No distribution of ration as per programme.
- Only 20 -30 percent work can be seen on the ground; the rest is only on paper.
- No facilities for drinking water, toilets, shelters, and creches for Babies etc at work place for labourers.
- In most places, heavy machines have replaced labourers.
- Implementation of schemes and Programmes without any Perspective Plan.

Disability

- Non-availability of proof certificate for the disabled.
- The disabled deprived of the benefits accorded to them in the schemes.
- The disabled are deprived of all the Govt. run self-employment and other schemes.

Few important points identified for evolving strategies:

- Negligence of Gram Sabha in Selection of beneficiaries in general meeting.
- Corruption in all welfare schemes and also in their implementation.
- No Control of Gram Sabha on land, water and forest.
- Increase in Migration.
- Resistance in Availing right to information programme and schemes.
- Regular and consistent increase in hunger deaths.
- Non- availability of even minimum wage fixed by the Govt.
- Inactiveness and irregularities of health and educational institutions.
- Traditional Maghi – Harum, Village heads are

deprived of the powers they have enjoyed since long.

- Gram Sabhas in scheduled regions are deprived of their additional power as directed in the Panchayati Raj Act 1996.
- Regular increase in oppression and exploitation of Women.
- Negligence of Rehabilitation of displaced Tribals during construction of big dams and setting up of industries..
- Even after the expiry of lease, the community is deprived of its control on land, water and other village based resources.
- Illegal possession of tribal land, tribals dispossessed of their land.

The following strategy and programmes were planned thereafter:

- Only Gram Sabhas should be responsible for organizing public meeting, selection of beneficiaries and implementation of programmes.
- All Development funds should directly reach the Gram Sabhas.
- Govt. officials, Gram Sevak and other outsiders will not be allowed to attend Gram Sabha meetings.
- Contract and monitoring of land, water and forest by Gram Sabhas.
- A hearing Committee should be formed at Block and District level to ensure a responsive and transparent administration.
- A collective approach and participation of community should be intensified to create a strong public opinion.
- Ensuring of women's rights and gender equality through involving women actively in all stages of development.
- Rallies, Processions and Public Hearings to be held at regular intervals in order to move the administration to action and augment its responsiveness and transparency.

Thereafter, all Village Heads took a pledge to ensure the success of the above-mentioned programme:

“We, the members of Gram Sabhas of Santhal Parganas, pledge to create a self-governed, self-dependent and self-reliant Jharkhand. We pledge to ensure a corruption-free, responsive and transparent administration. We pledge to wage a struggle for the control of our land, water and forest. We pledge to root out middle men and corrupt officials. We pledge to establish gender equality and involve women in all steps of development.”

After this oath, Mr. Sanjay Kisku declared the Deliberations Camp closed and said that the above pledge and strategy would be put forward in the Mass Meeting of October 30, 2005.

On October 30, 2005, the Mass Meeting began as per schedule, which was attended by around 7000 participants. The Members of the various Gram Sabhas endorsed the strategy evolved and jointly decided to give an application to the Commissioner, Dumka for his active role and intervention. In the application the members have hopefully requested the Commissioner to inform the directives within 3 months to Hakdari Maha Sabha which will be followed and operationlized by the entire Santhal Parganas region. If there is no directive forthcoming from the Commissioner within the stipulated three months, then the Gram Sabhas would be forced to take direct action.

Forthcoming

NREGA Advocacy Program

NREGS to stem migration in Jharkhand (August - September 2007)

The five districts of Santhal Parganas region in Jharkhand (comprising mainly of tribals) is a migration prone zone in India. An assurance of 100 days employment per family as promised by the NREGA could check migration to a large extent as villagers could get assured employment in their locality itself. As per the NREGS, villagers of a locality are entitled to obtain employment in the radius of 5 kms.

ICPRD, along with its partner NGO, Manavi, will organize an awareness cum social audit of the Scheme in Dumka District from August to September 2007.

Objectives of the Padyatra, followed by social audit programs / awareness programs:

- To disseminate information on NREGA program among targeted beneficiaries through folk culture/ local languages/ visual mediums etc.
- Through awareness program/ information dissemination process/ social audit process – bring the targeted groups in demand mode.
- To create a sort of friendly/ fearless / transparent environment among all stakeholders of this program.
- Increase the participation of target community in this program and develop a sort of common strategy acceptable to all stakeholders.
- To have a two-way interaction for better learning among all stakeholders of the programme to make full use of the scheme for target beneficiaries.

Action proposed to be taken

A team of village headmen along with women self help groups (SHGs) leaders will be visiting all panchayats of Dumka District in a jeep along with posters, banners and

other educational materials and educate people on this scheme and document field based data.

Efforts will be made to organize several **small meetings** in the village for **group discussion** on strategies to enhance participation of the community at all levels of NREGA. The Plan of Action is to:

- To verify the types of employment generated.
- The number of job cards filled in.
- Dummy filling of job cards (if any).
- Method by which Panchayat Sewaks distribute job cards (directly/middlemen etc.).
- Profile of families deprived of NREGA.
- Profile of cancellations in job card process.
- Whether families obtained job card after registration.

Audio-visual aids would be used to impart information. *Posters* would also be developed in local language along with wall writings. Through these various modes of dissemination, the **villagers would be encouraged to assess the ground realities** of this program in their own village. A good learning process could evolve so that they can become proactive and fearless in demanding the right given to them by the Act. Efforts would be made to involve local government officials throughout the process as it is perceived that they too may be facing genuine problems in the implementation of NREGS.

Visit of US Foreign Affairs Delegation

A delegation of MPs from the US Foreign Affairs Committee visited Jaipur, Rajasthan in April, 2007 for a IFES Gender and Law Program. The entire programme was highlighted by Dr. Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary, ICPRD.

ICPRD Male Youth Forum Members from Karnataka and Rajasthan (Youth Forums Against Gender Based Violence) presented street play and fusion imagery on issues of Gender Based Violence such as girl child discrimination, child marriage, dowry and wife beating. Members of the delegation had a meaningful exchange and interaction with the youth forum members and were happy to see young men being sensitized and proactive on issues of gender based violence.



Male Youth Forums performing street theatre at Jaipur, April, 2007. Also seen are members of the US Foreign Affairs delegation and Dr. Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary, ICPRD

ABOUT US

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

ICPRD activities are in the following niche areas:

- Policy Advocacy
- Mobilization at the grassroots
- Capacity Building
- Training Technologies and Aids
- Action/Attitudinal Research
- Coalition Building and Network Development

About **600** events have been taken up in these areas in the last 10 years. Over **10000** stakeholders in policy advocacy 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 **900 small rural CBOs/NGOs from 158 districts across 21 states** of India have been involved in various activities (around 160 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.
- **70 MPs/MLAs, in India and 11 SAARC / European MPs.**
- **105** Technical experts / Academia, universities
- **250** members of the National / local media
- Distinguished Police officers, security personnel, eminent academicians/intellecutuals.

In addition:

- **3400** poor and tribal women approximately have been trained and their capacities built.
- **30,000** stakeholders have been reached through our various programmes and activities that include Women's Groups, Panchayat members, Village

Heads, Teachers, Anganwadi workers, Youth Groups, etc.

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 and pro-gender 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. (For eg. Farmers' suicide victims).

2. **Exploring NGO - Governance relationships through interface** Organizing public hearings as **pro-poor** and **pro-gender** 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. **Citizens Report Cards on Development by State is also a niche area - the only civil society Organization to have reached 70 MPs/MLAs.**

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. The first Self help group manual for tribal women in Santhali language has been evolved by us (for micro – credit).

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 900 NGOs currently linked

to poor and remote locations - identified, interfaced and coalesced (detailed database available for such groups with ICPRD).

ICPRD niche areas to recap are:

- Training to build advocates and Women's 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. (such as Jharkhand, Orissa, Bihar, M.P., A.P., Karnataka, Tamilnadu etc.).
- Umbrella federation with over 900 NGOs currently linked to poor and remote locations - identified, interfaced and coalesced (detailed database often available for such groups with ICPRD). (focused on Central/South/East India).
- Training young men as advocates against Gender violence. (Research/ data base through detailed & latest techniques – action research) (Karnataka/ Rajasthan).
- 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.) (Andhra Pradesh, Central India).
- 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.
- Citizens' Report Cards on Development by State - Karnataka, Rajasthan, Orissa, Puducherry.
- Training tribal women as social entrepreneurs in areas unserved by financial institutions.

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