

Outcomes and Innovations!

IN SHORT

Farmers' Suicide Victims of Anantpur: Review of Rehabilitation and Relief Measures

A Plan of Action

As part of its pro-poor advocacy, ICPRD has sought to make the voices of the marginalized heard at the highest levels of policy making. Within this context, ICPRD facilitated the deposition of the plight of Farmers' Suicide Victims' Families at the Planning Commission in November, 2004. As a continuum of this effort, a **workshop** was organized in Anantpur, Andhra Pradesh on **May 28**, 2006 to enquire from the Families of Suicide Victims real facts about their current situation with regard to progress of rehabilitation and relief measures provided by the government. (contd. on page 2)

Rural Employment Guarantee Act

Recommendations and a Strategy Note evolving out of ICPRD's ground experience on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme - (contd. on page 6)

Men as Partners in Combating Gender Based Violence: Adding a new momentum to the challenge with "Youth Forums Against Gender Violence"

Interventions to address Gender Based Violence are usually targeted towards the **victims, i.e., women**. But a unique programme initiated by ICPRD endeavoured to engage men as partners and allies in combating Gender Based Violence, i.e. the arm that "**would potentially harm was sought to be transformed to an arm that**

would protect." This innovative "**Action to Intervention Research Project**" to address and cover young men was undertaken by ICPRD in five districts across Karnataka and Rajasthan - (contd. on page 10)

Micro-Finance Training Technology in Tribal Santhali Language – An India First

As a first for India, in its micro-finance advocacy campaign in Jharkhand (one of India's backward states in the poverty belt), ICPRD facilitated the preparation, in local Santhali language, of its field training manual on SHG group formation to reintegrate tribal women into financial institutions. The manual for management of tribal women's groups has pictorial representation of social mobilization concepts to reach out to the tribal women.

To recall, the barter system has been still practiced in the region till recently and to link them to the formal banking system, ICPRD also facilitated the preparation of SHG Bank linkage forms and other necessary banking formats in Santhali language as promotional ventures.

Occupational and entrepreneurial case-studies of successful tribal women entrepreneurs describing their life cycle including skills, experience, shocks, challenges and access to productive resources have been produced for **providing glimpses of policy advocacy to financial institutions, planners, government and civil society** - (contd. on page 15).

SAARC Workshop on Gender Violence: Report on the SAARC Regional Training Workshop held in Jaipur in October 2005 - (contd. on page 18)

Farmers' Suicide Victims - (contd. from page 1)



Farmers' Suicide Victims' Family Member putting her case forward at the Workshop on Outcomes of Agricultural and Food Security Policies in Anantpur, Andhra Pradesh, May 28, 2006

The Policy Advocacy Workshop on '**Outcomes of Agricultural and Food Security Policies in Anantpur**' was attended by 35 suicide victim families, 12 NGOs from 5 Mandals around Anantpur (Putluru, Narpala, Garladinne, Almakur, Kudair).

Objectives of the Workshop:

- Assistance received by the suicide victim farmers' families
- Understand the outcomes of this assistance to suicide farmers' families
- Analyse gaps/lacunae in strategy that could be addressed for corrective measures
- Advocate to policy makers

At the workshop, it was assumed commonly that the Government has been implementing many programs since 1970, but because of leakages/corruption in the various govt. departments, the beneficiaries seem unable to fully access the complete benefits under the various programs. Nonetheless, Anantpur has regressed from "**drought prone**" to "**desert**" in Government nomenclature.

Certain issues and challenges also need addressing continuously:

- The Government has provided a financial aid of Rs. 1,50,000/- to each of the victims' family under the Special Package given to the suicide victim families. Of this amount, Rs. 50,000/- was paid by the Government itself to offset the farmer's debts. The remaining

amount of Rs. 1 lac was deposited in a joint account with the Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO). **This amount has not been properly utilized as the family members lack awareness. They seem to be reinvesting the amount on agriculture, instead of using it for their economic stability or by taking up alternative livelihood. Often they lapsed back into debt due to this and other consumption needs.**

- All Govt. Departments related to agriculture, Panchayati Raj, Revenue and Horticulture and local NGOs do not collectively converge to help victims' families as highlighted in the G.O. 421.

Others include

- Spurious seeds in the market lead to crop losses.
- The farmers are not skilled in alternative forms of livelihood, such as cattle/sheep/goat rearing.
- Farmers do not get a remunerative/good price for their produced crop.
- Several programmes of the govt. are not uniformly implemented in all the districts.
- In the Food for Work Program, contractors have earned crores of rupees by opting for machinery instead of human resource.
- Old traditional methods for agriculture are used by the farmers. Agricultural extension is still inaccessible to the farmer.
- Several farmers try to bore wells without consulting geologists. This results in the borewells either failing to provide the much needed water or soon drying up. The costs incurred in digging these borewells becomes a dead investment for the farmer and adds to his debts.

Progress of Relief Measures

Government GO Ms. No. 421 is the crucial benchmark wherein the government began implementing relief and rehabilitation packages to Suicide Victims' Families.

- Relief was sanctioned to several families; currently, it is slack though.
- Creditors, including bankers, paid cheques as one time settlement (with documentary evidence) where the debt was more than Rs. 50,000.

- In several cases, in the face of disputes, one time settlement was not possible.
- In some cases, court decree for auctioning lands led to families paying over and above the cheque amount available to them, to settle debts. If the victim families did not settle over and above the cheque amount what was really due, acquiring hand loans would not be possible.
- In few cases, bank managers transferred the crop loans held by the deceased farmers in the name of the son or refused to close the crop loan.

The MRO and nearest of the deceased held joint accounts of the ex-gratia payment of 1 lakh. When withdrawn, this was mainly used for consumption and production purpose.

The main uses of withdrawals of ex-gratia payment by priority expenditure are:

- Crop production / medical expenses
- Agriculture / dairying / business / education / housing
- Marriage / gold & consumption purposes
- Not withdrawn from joint A/C
- In safekeeping for children's education

The GO No. 421 also provides for converging or linking financial assistance of other Govt. schemes. Dairying and SGSY were accessed a little by a few families. For those that had withdrawn amounts for dairying, SGSY could have been linked. Similarly, those buying powerlooms, were denied access to accounts as it was not for "agricultural purposes."

An Analysis of Measures

- It is felt that a distinction be made between strategies for the different beneficiary groups: Wage earners, Share Croppers, Tenants, Marginal/Small farmers, those involved in allied agriculture operations such as goat, sheep rearing, cattle rearing, etc.
- **All women at the workshop wanted to engage in other livelihood activities such as dairying/sheep/goat rearing/petty shop keeping/vegetable vending. They need to have access to loans and SHGs.**
- NREGA/Food for Work programs do not seem useful for **cultivators but for wage earners**. Though job cards have been issued, farmers do not seem to go for work.

- Linkage with SGSY and other alternative livelihood schemes needs to be accelerated on an emergency basis.
- Government assistance could reach in redressing where **loans from banks have been availed but have failed with moneylenders' debts**. Packages have not been allowed to be utilized as the joint A/C is with MRO – The **moneylender continues to be the most accessible source of hand loans** as RRB / Cooperative loan processing has hurdles (taking further time). Only those with passbooks can avail assistance, but several without it, cannot access benefits.
- **Leakages in sanctioning loans seems rampant.**
- **In Indira Prabha Scheme** for Agricultural land distribution to Scheduled Castes, identification of lands seems difficult due to lack of knowledge of Revenue personnel (as 'Karnams' or older Revenue Personnel, are non – existent now, and they had value added knowledge on all lands in the area).

Institutional arrangements

- **The Mandal team** of MRO, (Mandal Revenue officer) Mandal Agriculture officer and other officials **needs to be put into place. The Indira Kranthi Pratham (velugu formerly) or PRI officials** that are well versed with poverty issues (scheme formulation & implementation) could be focal points alternately. For e.g: SGSY & National old age pension schemes are implemented through PR and the entire ex-gratia payment can be untouched for consumption purposes as possibly, these officials dealing with suitable schemes could help victims of suicide easily access schemes. **Helplines have either not proved effective or ceased to exist.**

PLAN OF ACTION

Recommendations

Short Term Measures

- Regulate and monitor seed quality.
- Changing crop insurance unit to village from Mandal level.
- Enhance wage employment immediately for wage earners.
- Diversification into vegetables / floriculture / fodder crop.

- Supplementary income such as dairying, sheep rearing & some poultry through micro – enterprises loans, SHGs / NGOs.
- Without any concern for the old loans, continuance to finance and issue of new loans for Agriculture is mandatory.
- Auction of gold loan has to be stopped (banks).
- Govt. should encourage and help in community marriages as these are sources of debt (Samutlika Marriage).
- The banks are providing crop loans to the farmers but yet, the loan amount released is difficult to access (hurdles) or insufficient for them to meet the initial investment for cultivating the crops (or not in agricultural season). In order to meet the seeds, pesticides and other labor charges, the farmers borrow money from the money lenders, as they find it easy to get hand loans. RRBs and Co-operatives have to work on a war footing.
- The financial aid given to the victims under various schemes has to be increased. At the same time, they are to be encouraged and provided with various alternative livelihood options.
- Organize Rytumitra insurance groups under Life Insurance Corporation Schemes already available to SHGs.

Overall Recommendations

The Government has to immediately take the following steps to ensure and protect Agriculture:

- To extend land under Cultivation.
- To see that all necessary steps are taken in extension and supplying Seeds, Pesticides, and Fertilizers and other inputs to the farmers.
- To ensure that all the resources required like Water, Electricity are supplied adequately to the farmer till his crop is reaped.
- To ensure farmers obtain profitable price when they sell their crops. (to remunerate toiling through the year).
- NREGA to be implemented throughout the year in Anantpur district to prevent migration – in lieu of the agriculture season.
- e definition of ‘Farmer’ needs to be broadened as suggested by National Commission on Farmers - (including Animal / Sheep husbandry and so forth).
- Emphasis on allied activities such as dairying, sheep rearing, goat rearing and poverty and micro enterprises.
- Credit facility to be provided to tenant cultivators and share croppers also.
- Need to rejuvenate tanks. (4500 tanks/ kuntas/water resource bodies in Anantpur)
- Agriculture needs to be strengthened in respect of five major fronts – extension support, Input supply, Institutional credit, Marketing and Insurance.
- The Govt. GO on providing relief to the survivors of suicide victims needs to be effectively implemented - preferably through PR or IKP instead of revenue dept. - and linked with ongoing rural development programmes.
- Minimum support prices to be fixed for all important crops and coverage by crop Insurance schemes.
- Comprehensive land development schemes (CLDP) to cover self- help groups of farmers needs attention. (49 crores for 31,000 acres has been released (Land Development, Food Security, Gross Development, Horticulture, Dairy Development, Development of Water Resources) – But whether they are paper **pattas (titles)** or land could be reclaimed/ developed, needs to be enquired into. The land distributed to the landless laborers was not under cultivation for almost nearly 20 years (nearly 1,00,000 acres distributed).
- They are unable to bring it under
- cultivation through their own efforts and resources. The government has to help them in bringing the cultivation to the land under the **“Integrated Land Development Program”**. Otherwise it seems of no use.
- Insurance cover to farmers (LIC schemes) through SHGs. (Crop Insurance is being received from Govt.)
- The Self Help Groups interacted with the victims’ family members who requested immediate rehabilitation measures to help them under the supervision of any local NGO. The NGOs may be advised to prepare Special Project Proposals to CAPART, Central Social Welfare Board, and RMK to cover the affected families and extend the help these families.
- Thrift & Savings need to be activated through SHGs. Hand loans can be taken for emergency from the rotating funds. Funds / banks (NABARD /RMK / SIDBI) can support in providing funds to NGOs to identify, build and train groups in SHG management. Later, SHG – bank linkage could be possible.

It was felt that the dumping of heavily subsidized American/European Union produce in local markets is to be avoided to prevent farmers from going in for distress sales.

It was also felt that alternate employment is an immediate emergency measure.

All the participants at the Workshop stressed the need to take the necessary steps to protect and preserve agriculture as a profession. The National Commission on Agriculture recommendations needed to be accepted, they emphasized.

Case Studies of Suicide Victims' Families

Consumption Loans

Krishnamurthy could not earn enough through the crops he cultivated. He was also worried about his daughter's marriage. He had a debt of Rs. 2 Lac. He could not repay the loans and due to the pressure he faced from the money lenders, he committed suicide in the year 2000. The family received Rs. 1,50,000/- from the government. One Lac of this amount was deposited in the wife's name, who wanted to withdraw funds for her daughter's wedding. But the bank officials did not allow her to do so as she owed money to the bank. **She was forced to again borrow from moneylenders.**

Krishnamurthy, Pappur Village, Narpala

Continue loaning to victims

Shiv Shankar Reddy had borrowed amounts up to Rs. 5 lac, of which Rs. 3 lac was from the banks. Being the eldest in the family he had to shoulder all the responsibilities. None of his brothers helped him financially. He drilled 5 borewells in his fields, of which 4 failed. The water in the single bore well was insufficient for cultivating the land. The crop was drying up. He was also facing demands from the moneylenders to repay the money which he had borrowed for the marriage of his two sisters and for agriculture at Rs. 3/- interest. Unable to withstand the pressure, he caught hold of an electric wire and ended his life. **After his death, his wife has been disinherited and thrown out of the house along with their three children.** The family received Rs. 1,50,000/- from the government of which Rs. 50,000/- was paid to the money lenders and one lac was deposited in a joint account with the local Mandal

Revenue Officer (MRO). She is unable to support her children and pay for their education. She approached the local banks to give her a loan for cattle rearing. But the banks refused to give her any loan as her husband owed the bank a sum of Rs. 3 lac. She borrowed money from the local money lender at Rs. 3/- interest and purchased three she-buffaloes. She is managing to take care of her children with the sale of milk.

Shiva Shankar Reddy, Akkampalli

Son may suicide too!

Continuous failure of his crops and mounting debts which seemed unrepayable, Chennappa committed suicide by lying down on a railway track. His only son is now facing demands from money lenders. He feels he may be forced to choose the same fate as his father to escape from their clutches. **It is his request to the government to help him so that he can start some small business other than agriculture to earn his livelihood and to pay off his debts.**

Boya Chennappa, Illuru Village, Garladinne

Livelihood for Women headed Households

Peddi Reddy had incurred a debt of Rs. 6 lacs. He sold his 20 acres of land to pay off all his debts, including his bank loans. After he sold off his lands, he was unable to feed his family thrice a day. He became diabetic and the doctors told him that his right leg would have to be amputated. The operation would cost Rs. one lac, he was told. He approached local officials to help him but in vain. He did not wish his family to create new debts as a handicapped person and would be of no use to his family. So, he committed suicide by taking pesticides. **His family has received no assistance from the government.** His wife is not aware of any kind of government schemes to receive any assistance. **It is her request to the government to help her so that she can take up cattle rearing to support herself and her daughter.**

Peddi Reddy, Kodavakolu Village, Puttanur

Farmer to Labourer

Dastagiri had no land of his own so he took 4 acres of land on lease and cultivated it. He had borrowed nearly Rs. 1.50 lac from private money lenders at Rs. 3/- interest. He used this money for cultivating paddy and sunflower crops. He

lost the crop several times and the few times that he got a good crop, he could not get a good price for it. He stopped cultivating leased land and started accepting daily wage labour. Faced with demands from moneylenders to pay up and seeing no way out, he committed suicide by taking pesticides. **It had hurt his dignity and prestige that he had turned a daily labourer from being a farmer. The family has not received any govt. assistance.** Dastagiri, Karuvaikottala Village, Narpala

Rural Employment Guarantee Act - (contd. from page 1)

The basis of ICPRD understanding of NREGA is through the experience of five Regional State consultations held in Jharkhand, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Tamilnadu, Orissa, with over 1000 participants by ICPRD in the last year. In Rayalaseema too in AP with NGOs such discussions have taken place. (including with labour / women/ tribals). Further in Jharkhand three months ago, **padayatra** or walking tour with Gram Sabhas by NGOs / civil society was supported by ICPRD to, “discuss the role of civil society in the Gram Sabha or village council implementation of schemes.”

ICPRD’s access to Civil Society information in the NREGA Phase – I implementation districts are high ie approximately 65% of the districts. In the five Central India states of Orissa, Jharkhand, Bihar, M.P, W. Bengal, ICPRD has detailed NGO/ SHG directories in remote areas (over 500 NGOs in about 50 districts). In A.P, Member-Secretary, Dr. Azad has traveled in target districts in remote Naxalite areas, meeting potential beneficiaries.

A “**NREGA implementation challenges meeting**” was also organized in Dumka, Jharkhand by ICPRD in Feb. 2006. The interface had the four important stakeholders, namely

- **Civil Society** (Comprising 12 NGOs from ICPRD network (in Dumka (Godda, Deoghar), 10 academicians, 8 members of the Regional & English Media).
- **Government** (Deputy Development Commissioner in charge of NREGA and three of his officials)

- **Beneficiaries** (Tribal & Poor Women)
- **Political executives**

NGOs and media activists pointed out that a new parallel NREGA economy had been started that Civil Society should challenge, namely

- **with reference to accessing NREGS forms**
- **Filling forms**
- **Job Card provision**

It was suggested that **third parties** or **NGOs** could give out forms judiciously to minimize these and would have to sit on the “job card” for filling forms; and could actually get out “the job card” to the beneficiary, which is crucial.

The discussion in the Dumka workshop on **the State Employment Guarantee Act, Jharkhand and its differences with the Central Act were namely**, the following: **(this gives a sample of the differences between State and Central Acts).**

- Household definitions seemed different and vague in the State Act - providing loop holes.
- Unskilled and semi-skilled - no clear definitions and new usage of semi-skilled definition needs serious attention.
- “Gram Sabha” and “Am Sabha” are used as similar and inter changed in the State Act with diluting implications.
- Wages in kind during implementation need clarification - (is it Annapurna or other kinds of grain-gradation and its implication on remuneration).
- Women’s role specified is nearly nil.
- Support services in State Act not referred to (such as health / crèche etc.) Except that 5% will be cut for P.F. (whether it be from wages or 5% above is not clear.
- Communication Strategy: The State Act strategy seems similar to the NACO strategy which is often targeted to the literate. Street plays with ‘how much’, “**how, has it been done, ratio, quality / type of works/ labour**” needs to be brought in the messages. Most people seem to feel that NREGA is mainly for BPL families while the DDC of the District said he had a unprecedented no. of registrations, **and they were not yet prepared to implement it.**

रोजगार गारंटी योजना में संवादहीनता की समस्या: डॉ. नन्दनी

[illegible]

स्टेडर एक्ट में महिलाओं की भूमिका को नज़रअंदाज़ किया जा रहा है। पी एनडीए सरकार ने कहा कि सिर्फ़ नज़र एक्ट में एक प्रतिशत महिलाओं की शामिल करने की बात की गई है। रोहित को सही ढंग में समझा कर के लिए एनडीए ने अफ़्तार पर ख़र्च साहसवान नम्बर को ख़र्च कर लिया है। इस ख़र्च के अभाव में नज़र एक्ट में महिलाओं की भूमिका को नज़रअंदाज़ किया जा रहा है।

AN “INDEPENDENT” CIVIL SOCIETY ROLE IN NREGA IMPLEMENTATION - “Outcomes and not merely Outlays”

Dr. Nandini Azad, Member-Secretary, ICPRD and former Head, Outcome Monitoring Mechanism, Planning Commission, Government of India

Watch dog role for civil society

Hindustan, Deogarh, Jharkhand - 27/02/06

Lack of Consultation in SREGS : Dr. Nandini

Deogar / Ex. Planning Commission official and Member-Secretary, ICPRD, Dr. Nandini Azad critiqued the State Government of Jharkhand for not carrying out the Central Governments Rural Employment Guarantee Act in spirit particularly lack of Consultation with various stake holders. Dr. Azad speaking to the Press in the Circuit House referred to "the Household" definition in the State Act and its implication in identifying the poorest at the grassroots. Such vague understanding will lead to the real beneficiaries at the grassroots losing out in reality at implementation levels, she warned. Lack of usefulness of written posters at bus stands and railway stations (as specified in the state scheme) was questioned. She emphasized street corner street plays highlighting the correct messages for the illiterates. While dwelling on **the role of women**, she regretted that both the State and Central Act do not specifically 'indicate' or imply women or their specific role except 1/3 rd percent in the Central Council (and allocations?). In the implementation of works, she highlighted that self help groups should be given priority preference. These suggestions would be sent to Hon'ble Prime Minister and UPA leadership soon, she promised.

Seize the NREGA Scheme, she alerted Indian NGOs, with implications of crores of rupees for the poor. Without the Civil Society support in implementation, she called the scheme would be “an empty dream” implying its successfulness. Many social & political activists including NGO leaders Mira Singh, Uday Prakash, Binayach Sanyal were also present.

પ્રભાત અંકર

देवघर, 27 फरवरी, सोमवार, 2006, 3

विकास योजनाओं में एनजीओ की भागीदारी हो : डॉ नंदिनी

देवधर, 26 फरवरी : रा. सरकार की जो भी योजनाएं रही हैं, उसमें स्वयंसेवी महिला समूहों, सेवा केन्द्रों, ग्राम, बुध कक्षाओं आदि की मांगों पर ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है।

यस वा केन्द्र का काम अन्य एजेंसियों की तुलना में चलायी जा सकेगा। श्री आकाद ने कहा कि संस्थाओं, विकास योजनाओं में यदि सिविल सेवाएँ को शामिल किया जायेगा, तो यह वाच डोंग की पहल पर होगा। उन्होंने

Prabhat Khabar, Deogarh, Jharkhand - 27/02/06

Role of Civil Society in Development Programs:
Dr. Nandini Azad

The new programs of the Central and State Government must have the participation of NGOs, Women's Organizations, SHGs, youth clubs for successful implementation, emphasized Dr. Nandini Azad, ICPRD Member-Secretary. While commenting on the new NREGS, she said that NGOs could be given roles including 'small tasks' at different levels which should be compared in other districts or blocks where it is not so. Surely, the NGO success rate in implementing this scheme while compared will be definitely higher. If Civil Society was given watch dog roles, the scheme could be monitored properly. She was speaking on the occasion of flagging off tribal women SHGs from the area to Orissa for a exposure visit by ICPRD. Finally, she insisted that as Panchayats were non-existent in Jharkhand, "this mechanism" of NGO role in implementation was extremely essential. Shri Uday Prakash and other NGOs were present here at the briefing.

The **near absence** of the term “**NGO**” **voluntary agencies, people’s organizations** from the basic NREGS documents/manuals (MORD – operationalizing NREGA and NREGA/2005) seems to indicate ‘a position’ that **PRIs are people’s organizations! while Civil Society is a support structure.** This analytical conceptualization presents a **serious implementation dilemma.** If one looks at the Governance Chapter in the 10th Five Year Plan (Mid term Appraisal), it is clear that there exist **three arms of governance, namely the Civil service, PRI, & Civil Society.** NREGS implementation manuals fail to seriously provide Civil Society ie, **“the independent third sector with the watch dog function’.**

Implementation triumvirate

The implementation seems to continue to be vested at the local level in the triumvirate of

- The Distt. Collector/ Jilla Parishad Chief
- Pramukh / DPO
- Mukhya / Gram Sevak

The fund utilization also seems to be in the same sequence in the ratio of 20:30:50% respectively to the Village, block & district level, indicating the 'resource and administrative control' of this chain of implementers.

Access & Equity Concerns

- A long flogged issue at the district, block, village level implementation is **‘the access & equity concerns’** to the vulnerable & marginal population (both socially & economically backward). To once again repeat this oft remembered grim reality simply, the need to **break the caste-class-gender** hierarchy at the Gram Sabha / Samiti level is pivotal to reach the vulnerable/poorest. This has somewhat been possible due to the generation of demand of these sections through an organized / **aware voice through the mobilization of the poor** into

- NGOs, PVOs, SHGs, user groups & so forth.
- The classic “position” that PRIs are people’s participatory organizations may thus be theoretically acceptable but unfortunately implementation reality often belies it. In Bihar /Jharkhand etc 80% of the **PRI leadership are often criminal / muscle version. A recently conducted study by a National NGO of women Sarpanches in Bihar, indicate that 80% of the husbands had criminal backgrounds. Gram Sabhas cannot often dare articulate or demand or voice grievance easily for fear of acrimony or worse still, violence & death. Often, as one has seen, the counter leverage is the “small NGO” at the local level that seems to provide the “classic third party leverage & pressure” - (more as a check & balance, rather than argue that all NGOs are virtuous).**

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

Within this rather simplistic analytical frame of implementation, it maybe useful to kindly consider the following suggestions:

Suggestions

Monitoring

- **The Central Council of the NREGS needs to be independent.** The term voluntary agencies does not seem specified in the council. Similarly, only 1/3 rd are to be women. 1 /3rd seems a “**magic number**” that seems to deny a reality - (it should be possible that 50% of the council could be deserving women).

Implementation

- **In terms of expediency & speed,** Implementation could be delinked from day to day administration of MORD i.e. a **Mission mode** is a better frame – It could be better placed under the Hon. P.M directly, if it is to be seriously considered ‘**India’s flagship poverty reduction program**’.

Current Counter Checks

- **Vigilance Committees** – NGOs, PVOs, accredited Social Workers, Teachers, Professors, Lawyers, Doctor etc could be on it. Panchayat elected representatives or retired Bureaucrats could be minimal on it.

- **Empowering Gram Sabhas - A Scheme** needs to be initiated at the village level for SHGs /NGOs that maybe on the lines of the CAPART / CSWB Schemes or PRI Ministry Schemes. (the CAPART scheme is “**Organization & mobilization of Poor**” or and ‘AGP” – **Awareness Generation Program** (CSWB) could be provided mandatorily to “**the third party SHG or NGOs**” and could be dovetailed in the NREGS in the first few model districts for empowering Gram Sabhas.

Features of the above suggested scheme for NGOs / SHGs / Participatory research institutions

- to first mobilize the gram sabha,
- announce the features,
- discuss the works,
- make transparent resource availability,
- check quality of works apart from, finally
- discuss quality of completed work / ratio of labour: work costs.

Immediate Checks at Vital Pressure Points

- **Survey & identification of beneficiaries**
- **A Job card**
- **Identification of Works**
- **Gram sabha meetings / Social audit**
- **Actual Work**
- **Muster rolls**
- **Payment**

- At the level of ‘**identification of beneficiaries**, in Bihar / Jharkhand, migration is high. The job card issued is often benami. A simple scheme of “**third party Survey**” rather than **Gram Panch** conducting it, will make the foundation strong. This could minimize ‘boosting the number of’ job card beneficiaries & benami effect in a sense. Two important variables would be “**total household income**” including of all migrants as well as **length of residence of migrants in the village**” in the past 3 years.
- **Job cards** - This has important implications on the Scheme in terms of the number of **job cards** issued and identification of the needy - (differentials between landless, share cropper, tenant, farmer etc. has to be made).
- **Identification of Works** - a **works opportunity survey** needs to be conducted by “**a third party**” providing a shopping list

of works in consultation with a supported / aware Gram Sabha. This should match the skills available “**by season**” wherever possible, especially in the unorganized or informal sector” - (the most vulnerable sector).

- It may be useful first that the Gram Sabha draw up **a wish list of works** & possible NGOs associated in specific districts for a comparative profile (NGOs with experience in taking up such works, pertaining land, water, environment, Schools, roads etc.) This survey will clearly target / delineate assets/ required infrastructure too, apart from number of jobs created, thereby providing a rough cost/ benefit at the particular village, including level of quality infrastructure /job creation/ outcomes (and percentage of costs). These surveys need to follow a general & specific format (depending on type of works/ estimate). Maybe model surveys could be provided in the first instance to the Gram Sabhas.
- Qualitative input such as to access of these infrastructure by **vulnerability index** could also be useful. **For eg:** It has been seen that often high caste/ class create irrigation works in a predominantly, landless village (though it may provide all year round wages – it maybe useful to have small water resources which may enhance kitchen garden quality or enhance quick growing plants for energy or raise small goats). While macro economic planners, may at “**the 3000 ft they often think**”, not pay attention to these simple / real details, but the sum total of such practical and minimal solutions will no doubt add up to the quality of life of the vulnerable. **Or even reduce women’s drudgery to collect firewood - making it easy for her to earn a wage or carry on micro enterprise.**
- It has been often found that many works such as **canal cutting or pond clearing** which have feet specified are mostly never checked after implementation. The contractor though obliterated from the NREGS manuals is about the only person who can afford to spend 5-7 % in accessing these contracts sitting at the District level, as

he can invest resources to acquire it. Unfortunately, the quality of implementation of “the works” unlike in the earlier system with a designated contractor (though worse) were still pinpointable to him. Now it cannot be directly attributed to him but covertly so, with **the Gram Sevak as the front**. The Probability of tractors / machines cutting only few inches in works instead of for eg. “seven feet” could be the reality – **but who would check the reality or rather risk it?** The latter ie Gram Sevak would therefore be “**a victim**” of such a system.

- Checking of quality of works by “**a third independent party**” is also essential. While **Quality Monitors** are an excellent idea, pliable NGOs should not be coopted by elected representatives or retired level bureaucracy (**Capart Monitors** are a good instance of what should be avoided). This task could be attached to “the Work Opportunity identification survey”.
- **Muster Rolls** - With job card deflated **by the “survey” by the third independent party** in the simplest possible manner, surprise checks on possibly inflated muster rolls to check actual job cards are possible. Issued on the basis of “the third party recommendation” would be essential (apart from other criteria).
- **Payments** (1/3 rd payment to women or real payments or labour / works ratio) can only **be checked in person by the “third party”**. No amount of ICT/ MIS could possibly solve it completely. ICT provides data / resource lists & can be the numbers monitoring of the BRC (Block Resource Center) but not really assess actual payments on the spot.
- **Independent & parallel information**
The basic premise of the above arguments is that the Central Council of the NREGS must, in the first instance in the 200 districts, be able to access “**Independent opinion**” with direct access to **quality information on ‘equality concerns, level of corruption, actual implementation problems’** through parallel Civil Society channels.
- **Schemes**
The amount spent on the above including

schemes, would totally cost 30 crores approximately in 2500 blocks. It could be worthwhile **“building blocks of the program”** compared to its impact on quality and the utilization / outcomes. These are

- **“the Identification surveys”**
- **“Gram Sabha mobilization scheme”,**
- **work identification survey**

➤ **Women SHGs as implementation mechanisms**

Wherever possible, quality SHGs should be provided works implementation as successfully done in A.P leading to the successful micro finance movement of poor women. Experience has shown that savings accumulate due to profit when these SHGs carry out works and also enhance the families **“food security conditions”**. Further women are more diligent in providing labour for the immediate community as well as payments – **the SHG, when empowered, will be a formidable force for the contractor – implementer chain to confront**. Such counter leverages at the local level would play monitor/ watchdog apart from process evaluations. **Alert citizens are program’s sustainability**.

➤ **Low cost indigenous communication strategy**

Similarly the current **communication strategy** should include locally acceptable & communicable low cost forms” such as **street theater** of various forms that may enhance awareness of the public - this will also generate a demand, moving NREGS to be a **People’s movement**. (currently it is more print/ radio media-spots etc.). Local cultural mediums need to be used.

➤ **Grievance redressal** by the “same truinvarate” of implementers seems a dead end. The complaints are made about the same person, but petition is referred back to them “syndrome” - may not yield many positive results. **The vigilance committees** must include only “public persons”, who are not involved in actual implementation.

➤ **Training** quality would be high if not only Government institutions but also Civil Society provide training that enable the “Voluntary spirit”, apart from technicalities. It has been found that **whenever women panchayat members are trained**, they take up water, fodder, food, animal husbandry, wage issues

compared to male members that seem preoccupied with larger infrastructure, **which maybe critical but also invaluable in the percentage of commissions! Involving women in Panchayats and investing in their training will, in the long run, also minimize corruption.**

➤ **Public persons of eminence must be associated at local levels with the scheme linked to a list drawn up in the 200 districts, verifiable by the NYKS independently - (through not solely).** (for eg: Monitors, vigilance committee etc.). In the early 80’s, the DWACRA scheme linked to evolution of SHGs led to its high value and had such a strategy.

➤ **The above suggestions are pointers but for fine operational details, plugging all other loopholes, cautiously evolving “third party” engagement, is essential. Particularly, as patterns / trends will have to be analyzed by level of political / social / economic development by district as well as extent of civil society activism for specific local strategies - (generating accountability).**

NGO INNOVATIONS / PILOTS

The NREGS requires “that the people’s spirit is put into it, giving it the energy that it deserves”. Innovations can be taken up in specific FFW districts that have indicated success, such as the above, that can be **“dovetailed and are low cost quality inputs”**.

Male Youth as allies in fighting Gender Based Violence: National Innovation - (contd. from page 1)



Young men performing street theatre in Jaipur, Rajasthan to create awareness regarding Gender Based Violence

ICPRD's innovative approach to the Project:

- **First**, conduct sustained **research** on male youth from selected low income communities to find out perceptions, attitudes and behaviour patterns regarding **gender norms**.
- **Second**, undertake **training and interventions** with the objective of increasing awareness of Gender Based Violence and cause a behaviour change in the young men to reduce gender based violence in their poor and low income communities.

Community Resistance

At the start of the project, ICPRD faced tremendous resistance from local communities, which broke down as the project progressed, through consistent dialogue and visits by staff.

Village heads/youth opposed the staff and instructed them not to visit them again with such issues.

In some places, people thought that it was a political movement. In several instances, parents objected to IDIs (In-depth Interviews) being administered on their children. In addition, some young men were not interested and hesitated to talk on GBV and on personal matters. They were even ridiculing the questions being asked. But the attitude of the young men changed after attending ICPRD workshops.

Scientific Studies

ICPRD conducted a scientific study on young men from the age group 14-17 years and 18-24 years, both married and unmarried from a low socio-economic group of the target area. The study showed that perceptions regarding the role and functions of men and women in the community, though rapidly changing due to globalization and industrialization, **at best remains stereotyped.**

While myths regarding masculinity and sexuality still exist in different forms and dimensions, **certain positive encouraging trends were also identified. It was perceived that a few young men have begun to view girls/women as equal partners, who possess intelligence, thinking power and rights as equals.**

It was noted that youth who have been brought up by their mothers, or have working mothers, are

more gender sensitive and have more respect for women.

Here's a case study of a young man from Ittamadu village, Bangalore rural district, Karnataka, who has a working mother and a girl friend who is educated and belongs to the higher strata of society. The young man is professionally and socially networked through various sanghas and youth clubs. These kind of positive influences of children socialized in women headed families or who have been affiliated to organizations led ICPRD to initiate Youth Forums Against Gender Based Violence.

Some of the responses of the young man from Ittamadu Village:

"My mother brought me up with a great deal of effort, working hard. I am what I am because of my mother."

"If violence happens to a woman, I can't bear it. I try to resolve the fight to the best of my ability."

"In our community, we have certain set notions of roles for wife and husband leading to stereotypes. Be it a girl or a boy, they should receive equal education and the education should be suited to their likes and talents."

What was apparent also in the study was that patriarchy seems more difficult to deal with in Karnataka as compared to Rajasthan. This has been borne out by a recent IDS, Jaipur study which indicates that the HDI indices of Rajasthan in selected Panchayats were better off.

Intervention activities in select communities in Karnataka and Rajasthan

With its strong community based work and grassroots presence and with the help of local NGO partners (**Working Women's Forum (WWF)** in Karnataka and **Jan Kalyan Sahitya Manch Sansthan (JKSMS)** in Rajasthan, ICPRD targeted the young men of the select areas to transform potential perpetrators of violence into protectors. As part of the intervention strategy, activities carried out were:

- Community Mobilization
- Mass Awareness Campaigns

- IEC Workshops
- Street Theatre
- Training and Capacity Building Workshops

Community Meetings/Forums for awareness building were organized to mobilize the community. ICPRD sought to actively involve the community, local agencies and stakeholders to ensure that programme outcomes are locally 'owned' by the community.

Mass campaigns were organized in selected villages in each of the 5 districts for mobilizing the communities for reducing GBV. Through these mass campaigns ICPRD was able to reach out to approximately 6000 direct and indirect stakeholders. (young men and women, parents, teachers, panchayat members, SHG group members, etc.)

Culturally appropriate and gender sensitive posters, handbills and other IEC materials were developed and disseminated during meetings in order to provide basic information on the issue of violence against women.

Street plays, image theatre, songs, skits were enacted and discussions followed with the community for engaging them in a dialogue, for assessing their views and sensitizing them on the need for reducing incidences, which lead to gender based violence. Nearly 300 young men/women participated in exposure and exchange visits between Karnataka and Rajasthan projects.

In some places, **Posters** were used for public awareness on GBV whereas in others rallies holding banners were organized to sensitize the community on GBV followed with discussions on the need for gender equitable norms.



Young men taking out a rally for creating awareness regarding Gender Based Violence in the community in Bangalore, Karnataka.

Training and Capacity Building Workshops were organized for the youth leaders and peer educators, who were the key facilitators of ICPRD's community-awareness programme to carry forward the follow-on after the interventions.

Youth groups were formed comprising of students and working young men of the age group 14-24 years

Strategy

- First an attempt was made to gauge their level of sensitivity regarding Gender Based Violence.
- Thereafter they were facilitated to identify the various forms of violence in their community.
- A module was then prepared which helped them become aware of violence: what is violence, what is Gender Based Violence and what they can do to stop it in their communities.

Overall, 100 youth leaders were identified and selected on criteria such as commitment, availability, motivation, capacity and leadership skills and trained on gender, Violence Against Women, prevention and reduction.

They were also trained in:

- Communication skills
- Information sharing and receiving techniques

Gender Equity Scale (GES) – scale to measure shift in attitude and behaviour

A GES Scale, Pre and post training was administered on youth leaders to see qualitative changes in their attitude towards women. The GES revealed that the training was very effective reflecting an overall changes in attitude shift and behaviour of young men in Rajasthan as well in Karnataka.

State Level Dissemination Workshops

State level Dissemination Workshops were organized both in Karnataka and Rajasthan in February 2006 to share the findings with NGO partners, Investigators, Consultants, Teachers, Youth Organizations, Sarpanch, parents and project staff of ICPRD.

The community applauded the efforts of ICPRD, saying that they could see behavioural changes in the young men of there area and would like more of their youth to participate in the programme.

One woman shared how she had sponsored the education of a girl child after becoming aware of the importance of education for girls.

Impact of the project

The Young Men as Partners against GBV project has had the participation of the following stakeholders in its various activities.

- Youth Leaders
- NGO Representatives
- SHG members
- Community
- Teachers
- Members of Parliament
- Government officials (NYK Co-ordinators)
- Media

A total of 9,145 beneficiaries, both direct and indirect, have been reached through the project.

Beneficiary change: young men

Though the change is visible in the community as a whole, it is most evidenced in the young men of the target areas. The youth have courage now to speak on sensitive issues which they found difficult even after 6 months of the project. ICPRD was also able to change their perception regarding violence. Before the project, they saw violence only in terms of physical violence but after ICPRD intervention, they could understand the different forms of violence.

Youthspeak

We came to know that equal rights should be given to women. Teasing and beating of women should be stopped. We should understand that we should not beat each other and first of all, we should stop violence at home.

We should not behave differently with the girl and boy child in any way. We should not be violent to others. We should not spread gossip about girls/ women.

We will not allow violence to take place in our communities.

We will protect the women in our communities.

The change is apparent from the fact that now the same young men are talking about GBV and making efforts to stop it wherever they can.

- Parents appreciate and have a good opinion of this project.
- Teachers say that they can prevent violence by not beating children in the school
- Village heads say that they can prevent violence in their villages with the help of ICPRD and they are ready to support ICPRD. This will also support in the battle against alcoholism and food security.

The youth have been instrumental in reducing issues related to eve teasing, alcoholism, dowry and other such issues in their areas and have come out quite strongly to protect the young girls and women of their community.

Voices of Young Men Fighting Against Gender Based Violence

Karnataka

Young Men propagating girls' education

"My friend's parents are living with their son and daughter. My friend's sister has passed SSLC and his parents have not sent her to college for further study. One day I heard about this from my friend. I went with some of my ICPRD friends to his house. We advised his parents about the importance of girls' education. Initially, they did not agree to this, but after advising them several times, they have agreed to send their daughter to college. Now this girl is studying in IInd year."
HP Camp, Hospet

Challenging eve teasing

"I saw some of my friends teasing girls. I knew that what they are doing is wrong because I have attended workshops conducted by ICPRD. So, I tried to advise them. But they teased me in turn. One day I took them to the workshop. There they learnt problems facing by women in our society. After attending the workshop, they have completely changed. I am very happy by their reformation". **Village Kampli**

Stop violence on mothers

“An alcoholic son was in the habit of beating his mother and small children after consuming alcohol daily. When we heard about his misbehaviour, my friends and I visited his house and advised him to stop consuming alcohol. But he did not listen to our advice and he started scolding us. He told us that he knows what is right and what is wrong and there is no need for him to take any advice from us. So we went to ICPRD and told them about this alcoholic person. The members of ICPRD visited this man’s house. They made him aware about the problem and impact of alcohol i.e. what are the problems he has to face in society and how it affects his health, children etc. After listening to their advice, he has stopped consuming alcohol. Now he is looking after his mother and his small children with love and care. I requested ICPRD to work in this area and to give more awareness to people on this issue.” **BCC Ground, Bellary**

Rajasthan

Closing liquor shops

On the very first night of the **Mass Campaign** in Jaipur urban, one participant who is an auto driver was so charged up that he, along with his few friends, had the courage to agitate and threaten en masse the closure of a liquor shop.

Psychological violence

A peer educator who, before the project, used to go to the market along with his friends and tease girls, even touch them, and this had become his habit, now has stopped doing so and started thinking about the negative effects of the mental and psychological violence that he and his friends inflict on girls/women.

Emerging New Trends

By working directly with the communities at grassroots level, organizing mass campaigns, street theatre and talking with young men intimately through in depth interviews, certain new trends have been identified which merit mention:

- ❖ Girls’ higher education, technical and professional growth is the key to changing socialization pattern and stereotype roles of women and men.

- ❖ Breaking down of traditional and stereotype image of roles of women also helps in developing new identity where women are respected as individuals.
- ❖ Economic pressures which are forcing women to go out of the house to work is also breaking down the barriers where women are no longer in passive roles and men are forced to accept them in these new roles.

Socialization pattern changes required through:

- ❖ Employment for women leads to higher leverage at home; empowered they seem better socializers of gender neutral male youth
- ❖ Change in education curriculum to make it more gender sensitive; need to disaggregate and make it value based.
- ❖ Educate the girl child and mainstream them into higher education and employment.
- ❖ Sensitize youth and community through mass campaigns, street theatre workshops.
- ❖ Make aware women, young girls and boys on these issues simultaneously
- ❖ In communities, develop internal systems to reduce gender based violence which could do away with enforcement from state machinery, eg. Police and law.
- ❖ Sensitization of other stakeholders, teachers, opinion leaders at the community level is needed to promote gender equitable norms.

ICPRD’s crusade against Gender Based Violence – Empowering Young Men to Become Change Agents – Other Key activities to achieve vision, mission and goal

- ❖ **Organized advocacy events for visiting MPs at the ICPRD’s MPs’ Exposure Visits to expose MPs to social activism through ground level activities.**

MPs who are at the highest echelons of policy making in the country were sensitized to new techniques involving young men to combat GBV practices. Some wanted to spread the message which was unique and not “ghettoed by converted women combating perpetrators”, while others were inspired at ICPRD’s Street Theatre technique in carrying messages particularly regarding gender and specifically regarding GBV.

- ❖ Initiated a new extension of the crusade against GBV in 4 blocks of Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu for combating Gender Based Violence including IEC materials.
- ❖ Conducted 2 National Street Theatre Workshops in which an interface between the Public Representatives and the Youth took place. 200 women from Working Women's Forum, (WWF), Chennapatna, Bellary, Kota, Jaipur Rural, Bangalore participated in the workshop. This also served as a platform for the sharing and learning of youth leaders from the 3 states of Karnataka, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu and together highlight, through role play, the various atrocities perpetrated on women, such as rape, dowry and alcoholism.

This platform is a unique and innovative one to bring together the grassroots level workers to share and exchange experiences to further the campaign on Gender based violence, though the programme has been tried out earlier in Africa.

The use of street theatre as a communication tool was initiated by young men as partners in combating violence against women by creating mass awareness through this methodology.

At the street theater workshops participants portrayed various images, depicting situations in which a woman is the victim, such as girl child discrimination, alcoholism, child marriage, eve teasing and rape. The audience were then asked to identify the issues and suggest possible solutions. The response was tremendous and amazing solutions were presented by the audience. Visting MPs under the ICPRD's Exposure Visits project, also participated in these street theater workshops and enacted possible solutions.

Young men are effectively using this technique to spread their message among the people and ICPRD is now employing this novel concept as a powerful communication tool to reach out to a widespread of people through holding similar workshops in different parts of the country.

Santhali Tribal Women: From Barter to Micro Finance Institutions - (contd. from page 1)



Women at a Cluster Workshop organized by ICPRD in Jharkhand, May 2006

ICPRD initiated its micro finance advocacy campaign for poor tribal women in the remote and backward districts of Jharkhand in 1998. In its interactions with the local Santhali women, ICPRD found that they had to face major challenges in their day-to-day life:

- live in a caste-ridden feudal economy
- are extremely poor and illiterate
- their agriculture based livelihood is dependent on the monsoon
- in the absence of formal credit institutions, they are forced to take loans from the local mahajans who charge high rates of interest (as much as 50%) which they are unable to pay and thus fall into a vicious debt trap from which it is impossible for them to come out.

Building Micro-finance Networks

ICPRD's field mobilization in the area also assessed that though NGOs were working in the area and Self Help Groups were functioning, NGOs were weak and scattered and did not have the technical micro finance competence for developing SHGs. The infrastructure, too, was weak.

ICPRD Goals:

- Empowering tribal women financially
- Building their capacities
- Creating micro-finance institutions in this remote area

Strategy

ICPRD networked with local NGOs and identified against all hardships to collaborate with each other to accomplish the joint goal of addressing the institutions.

Trailblazing Micro-finance Movement

ICPRD has trail blazed the micro finance movement in Santhal Parganas today with 3000 women having been trained as social entrepreneurs (thrift, savings, leadership) through 111 training programmes held in Dumka, Deoghar, Jamtara and Godda districts in the last 5-7 years.

Variety of training included:

- Management of MFIs
- Training of Trainers (Micro finance)
- SHG Members' Training
- Building a Micro Finance Cluster Federation
- Enterprise Promotion Activities
- Coalition Building for Empowerment
- Microfinance Advocacy

Today, these poor women entrepreneurs have become a powerful force in their villages:

- Confronting village problems through a joint struggle
- Standing for panchayat elections
- Filling tenders for government contracts
- Even making government functionaries accountable!



Tribal women sharing experiences at an ICPRD Workshop in Jharkhand

Growth and Types of Enterprises

Initially, ICPRD found that women were engaged in low paying, low profit occupations individually. Today, several new enterprises and cases have emerged with its effect on the group: Sattu, Bakery, Jewellery, and Vermi-Compost due to capacity building of NGOs/SHGs, advocacy and networking.

Sattu Enterprise – Labelling and Patent: (flour made from a type of gram called 'chana'.

Chickpea flour containing protein and eaten as Protein) Members of **Saraswati SHG of Mohanpur village in Deoghar** are the proud marketers of their own group enterprise. ICPRD has helped these tribal rural women to understand local based business activities through exposure visits of these women to other groups which are involved in business activities.

The women are involved in the manufacturing and marketing of sattu in the area and are expanding this business with financial assistance from ICPRD. **Packaging the manufactured sattu into packets and labelling them is adding a brand value to their product.**

This has not only helped the group members to understand the functioning of micro enterprises like purchasing raw materials, manufacturing and marketing the products but has also boosted their morale towards a more egalitarian society.

Before they started this enterprise, the women were involved in daily wage labour at the nearby crusher, crushing stones. They were out of their homes day and night. After starting this enterprise, they have the dignity of being entrepreneurs; as they are operating from home, they are able to look after their families; they have enough time to work in their own fields and there is the added social prestige they enjoy amongst their families and in society.

Baking Irish Doughnuts: Tribal Women

Bakery Enterprise: Before the support from ICPRD, tribal members of the **Gulab and Champa Baha groups of Sarwa village in Dumka district** were mostly involved in labour jobs apart from monsoon dependent agriculture and vegetable cultivation. Today, with training from ICPRD, they are involved in the different stages of cake and doughnut baking – from manufacturing to marketing through rotation duties. They have bought a small mixie, iron pots, and an oven. Mrs. Rawdi Murmu, the president of Gulab Baha SHG, has good experience in baking cakes and doughnuts. Irish missionaries had taught her father in law years ago. She has trained the members of her SHG in baking and selling cakes. All the baked cakes and doughnuts are not only consumed in the local market (schools, colleges), but also in village

mandies and haats. The members earn a profit from daily labour and marketing jobs. On an investment of Rs. 385/- they are able to earn Rs. 1,000/- per day. Cake business is a viable livelihood option which can be expanded and later established as a continuous source of income for these group members.

Organic Farming boosted

Vermi-Compost: In **Narayanpur village**, most of the families have cattle (cows and buffaloes) and animal husbandry contributes around 30-40% of their annual income. 12 members of **Ankur SHG** of this village attended a government sponsored demonstration workshop on vermi compost in Jamtara. The participants were given samples of 2.5 kg. of worms and 10 kg. of vermi Compos. They applied this 10 kg. sample in their flower gardens and saw the difference with an augmentation in the number, size and brightness of marigold flowers. The worms were fed on cattle dung after making beds on soil under free shades. They covered the beds with straw, banana leaves, and sprayed water for moisture, whenever needed. More compost was ready within 25-30 days in the upper portion of the beds and they applied this compost in the fields and found the difference in the production of wheat and vegetables.

Seeing the spectacular results of organic farming, the members wanted to augment this exercise, which they were able to do with ICPRD assistance. The quality of their crops has enhanced; they are saving money on fertilizers and there is a bonding in the community as members from different castes are working together.

Crafting Silver Jewellery

Phulmani Devi is a member of **Gangotri SHG** in **Kadampur village in Dumka**. She has started her own enterprise of making and repairing gold and silver jewellery items.

“Having a group at the village level really makes non-exploitative credit accessible for poor and unorganized people like us. We were earlier exploited by village money lenders for accessing credits for our business activities at very high rates of interest,” she says. It is this low interest credit from her SHG that has helped her to start her jewellery business with a loan of Rs. 7000/-.

The marriage season is the most profitable time for her enterprise when there is much demand for making and repairing jewellery items.

How did she think of starting a jewellery business? ‘We are dependent on agriculture for our livelihood which is monsoon-based. Earlier my son was working in a jewellery shop in Dumka. Later, he came back to the village and started his own jewellery shop. It is from him that I learnt the art of making and repairing gold and silver items,’ she says.

Regular members’ trainings, Training of Trainers and Exposures on Livelihood under ICPRD project have enhanced her capabilities, she feels.

Her future plans include taking another loan after repayment of the present loan in the second grading of the group under the SGSY scheme and using the profits for the marriage of her second daughter. Phulmani Devi, Kadampur Village

Case Studies of Successful Tribal Women Entrepreneurs



Tribal women of Jharkhand engaged in various livelihood activities

A Woman of Substance

32 year old Churki Soren is an empowered woman today, nominated by her self help group and villagers to fight for panchayat elections in Murbhanga PO. This is no mean feat for an anganwadi teacher earning Rs. 500/- per month, belonging to a farmer family.

Secretary of the Hopon Marsal Self Help Group, she has attended training sessions conducted by

ICPRD in Dumka which helped develop her capacities. “I learnt from members who went on a ICPRD Exposure visit to Kolkatta about various livelihood options. One of them was potato cultivation This is how I started cultivating potatoes,’ says Churki.

She owns 3-4 **bigha (1 acre)** land on which she cultivates paddy, maize, **arhar (lentil)** for the consumption of the family only.

She has taken loans from the group 4 times. She started potato plantation with a Rs. 1000/- loan from the group. ‘I invested the entire amount for potato cultivation. I had a rich crop,’ she says.

Along with potatoes, she also planted onions, tomatoes, brinjal for consumption purpose but she had a good crop of tomatoes which she sold and earned Rs. 1000/- in Kurum, Gando and Chirudih **haats or fairs**.

‘What I need now is a **well** so that I can cultivate more and improve my livelihood. I got this idea of expanding my enterprise in this way through ICPRD and RTDF (Rural Tribal Development Foundation),’ says Churki.

Churki Soren, Sahargatti Village, Dumka

Many hats to wear!

At 22, Mini Murmu seems to have encompassed a lot in such a short life - Secretary of her Self Help Group, farmer; entrepreneur, constructing toilets in her village, Asan bani, making mats and brooms – this multi-faceted Santhali woman wears many hats.

Mini has tried her hand at various enterprises – selling chicks, cakes and **murhi ghoghni (puffed rice served with vegetable made of peas)**, the final being her main area of business activity.

‘I started the business of selling murhi ghoghni with my mother’s help,’ says Mini. ‘I am the Secretary of Badoli SHG and have taken loans from the group several times. These loans have helped me invest in various enterprises for the livelihood of my family. For my murhi business, too, I took a loan from the group. I invested the entire amount, i.e. Rs. 200/- and I earned Rs. 500/- from it. My mother prepared the murhi at home and I sold the murhi at the village fair, lottery mela and football matches. It is a very profitable

business. The ICPRD conducted trainings have been of great help to me. I learnt how to expand my business activities; about group grading and livelihood options. I also learnt about the functioning of SHGs and the importance of savings,’ says Mini.

Mini got an opportunity to attend the training for toilet making at Kathara, Dumka, organized by PWD for members from various SHGs. It is her SHG group that has won the contract of constructing toilets in her village.

Mini Murmu, Asanbani Village

SAARC Regional Training Workshop on Gender and Development (Focus on Gender Violence), October 2005 - (contd. from page 1)



Her Excellency, Mme. Pratibha Patilji, Honible President of India as the then Governor of Rajasthan and Dr. Nandini Azad, Member Secretary, ICPRD with Staff at the SAARC Regional Workshop on Gender Violence. Jaipur, October, 2005

In her valedictory address, **Smt. Pratibha Patil, Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan and Chief Guest at the SAARC Workshop**, welcomed the participants and expressed her happiness and satisfaction at this debate on the serious issue of gender based violence.

Smt. Pratibha Patil observed that gender based violence is universal, and developed countries are not spared of it. In SAARC Countries, Patriarchy and male dominance is high and the rate of prevalence of crimes against women is also high in this region. Gender based violence is a violation of the basic human rights of women. She emphasized the need for self assertiveness of women to fight against violence. Lack of self confidence among women due to a stereotyped image of woman is one of the prime reasons for violence. She spoke of women's struggle against violence in the state of Maharashtra. That

Reporting on the Workshop proceedings and the address by the Hon'ble Governor, The Hindustan Times, Rajasthan edition, said: *"....personal empowerment of a girl by equipping her with judo-karate, self-confidence and economic independence was the only hope against the current suppression and oppression."* It further added: *"Police personnel too had to change their mindsets.50 per cent of cases of violence against women would be taken care of only if the police department would take responsibility."*

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HT Jaipur Live

Gender-based violence has no borders, say activists

HT Live Correspondent

VIOLENCE AGAINST women has no geographical boundaries. Violent acts like dowry deaths, wife beating, honour killing, trafficking, sex selective abortion and sexual harassment at workplaces etc are prevalent across the limits of class, ethnicity, religion, culture and location.

These views were expressed on the second day of a workshop of the SAARC countries. International Commission on People's Rights and Development (ICPRD) is organising this five-day workshop on 'Gender and development'.

Gender-based violence was seen with the prudence of physical and psychological abuse and oppression, said Dr. Nandini Azad, the Chairperson, ICPRD. She further said that gender discrimination and exploitation was widely present in almost all

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the SAARC countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives). During the discussion it was observed that dowry related violence in India honour killing in Pakistan, trafficking in Nepal and Bangladesh had very high prevalence.

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Strategic Response to Development Challenges – Governor

The Governor of Rajasthan, Smt. Pratibha Patil, said that society faces innumerable development challenges today. It is imperative that we respond to these challenges by agreeing to a social contract that will ensure the growth of the country, the eradication of poverty, the resolution and development of society. Both the government and society have a broader role to play in ensuring the growth of the country. The government has a responsibility to ensure the commitment to empower the poor and women of our society. Smt. Patil was addressing the Regional Training Workshop for Gender and Development in SARC Centres organized by the Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development on Wednesday at Chhatli Dhari Resort, in Jaipur. The Governor stressed that there is a need to bring about a radical reform in the status of women for the overall development of the country. We have to educate them and we have to make them aware of their rights. We have to create an environment of gender equality and development in society. Health and Nutrition are the key to the empowerment of women. We have to work towards strengthening the economic and social participation of women in society. Smt. Patil stressed that there is a need for a dialogue and a disposition on gender and economic equality. For the healthy growth of society, we have to empower the poor and women of our society. We have to remove all economic and social discriminations and balance the power. The deprived and the marginalized have to be given opportunities. The Governor said women have to become physically and mentally strong. We have to create a conducive environment in society that can facilitate the proper growth and development of women. The NGOs have an important role to make the women of the country empowered. We have to involve in decision-making process. They are capable and do not need any special care. We have to involve all family and social, as well. The Governor said that the majority of people live in the poverty of the poor towards self-reliance. The poor suffer after their meagre earnings in such conditions. The women should opt for a different, constructive role of such acts.

At the beginning of the Workshop, Dr. Namini Anand, Chairperson of the Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development, gave a detailed orientation on the Workshop. She informed that representatives from Nepal, from Sri Lanka and other countries were taking part in the Regional Workshop. Ms. Rajniya Thapa from Nepal, Ms. Priyanka Khatri from Bangladesh, Ms. Fiazat Wafar from Maldives, Ms. Shaheen Husseini from Sri Lanka and Dr. Shahida Khan from Pakistan presented reports on the economic and social status of women in their respective countries along with other aspects of development.

In her welcome address, **Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD**, spoke about the **SAARC working group on Gender and Poverty (SWGPP)** which was formed in 2003 by four well known civil society organizations in Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Nepal in Colombo to draw attention to the magnitude of gender and poverty in the South Asian Region (approx 250 Million poor women). ICPRD is India convener of SWGPP, she informed the gathering. In May 2005 in New Delhi, SWGPP had a regional dialogue of Parliamentarians and NGOs from SAARC countries on the same theme wherein the Hon'ble Minister, Shri Shivraj Singhji Patil, Smt. Kanti Singh, MOS – Women, were present. At this dialogue it was decided to hold this event in Jaipur for building capacities in this area.

There were 21 participants comprising representatives of six SAARC countries from reputed civil society institutions. Well known organizations such as (Agromart/ Sri Lanka, Behbud/Pakistan, BNPS/ Bangladesh, FASHAN/ Maldives, Diripiyasa/ Sri Lanka, INHURED/Nepal, NUK/Bangladesh, Rushan/Pakistan, ICPRD/India, WWF/India) participated in the workshop. Senior resource persons from the women's movement also contributed in this workshop.

The presentation of country papers by participating SAARC NGO representatives and the group discussions that followed highlighted the chilling fact that women in the SAARC region are subjected to violence which is similar in its form and manifestation.

Be it the honour killings in Pakistan, or dowry related deaths in India or trafficking in Nepal and Bangladesh, women bear the brunt of living in male dominated societies.

Women's groups and civil society institutions in the SAARC region have been in the forefront in fighting against atrocities/violence against women and girl children in the SAARC countries. As a result of the success of women's groups' activism, the governments in these countries have had to respond either through enacting appropriate new laws or by way of providing teeth to the existing ones.

Giving an overview of **Gender Violence in Pakistan**, **Dr. Shahida Khan, Representative from Behbud** said the use of physical power or violence against women has many faces from wife beating to bride burning and acid throwing to honour killings. **What is shocking is that these crimes not only go unpunished but are tolerated in silence – the silence of society as well as that of its victims.**

Cases of acid attacks seem to be growing at an alarming rate. A charitable organization, set up to assist acid attack victims, stated that in the last 10 years, 15000 cases have been reported, often inflicted by their husbands or in-laws.

The legs of a married woman, Sultana, were amputated allegedly by her brother-in-law in the name of honour in a village near Sargodha. The accused, who was arrested the day of the incident, alleged that Sultana had illicit relations with a villager. The injured woman, admitted to the hospital, alleged that the accused wanted to marry her younger sister, and had acted against her after the proposal was rejected.

Ms. Ranjana Thapa, Human Rights Officer, spoke on the Pattern of **Violence Against Women in Nepal**. In this regard she observed that the chain and form of violence against women are interrelated. A background of one case gives enough ground to produce another violence. Giving instances, she said that rape and sexual violence often come together or related with domestic violence and political violence.

Women and girls of Nepal are trafficked to or via India for the purpose of sex trade, factory work or domestic work.

The role and movement of NGOs working on women issues have had much effect on policy making and law enforcing bodies in Nepal, Ms. Thapa said.

Ms. Shamima Afroz Shiuli from Bangladesh Nari Progoti Sangha categorized the causes for violence against women in Bangladesh into 3 broad classes:

1. Attitude and dubious role of government
2. Religious fundamentalism and
3. Societal mindset

The women and feminist organizations in Bangladesh have devised various strategies to combat violence against women. The main

strategies are raising awareness, mobilization, advocacy and lobbying in local, national and policy level, legal support, networking. Though more organizations are working for women, women in Bangladesh are now more vulnerable to violence than they were ever before. She was of the view that more deliberate efforts are needed, in local, national, regional and international level to overcome the present situation.

Presenting the country paper on **Gender Violence in Sri Lanka**, **Ms. Rukmalie Shalini Hurulle, Outreach Co-ordinator, ‘Diripiyasa’ Trust Fund**, observed that gender based violence in Sri Lanka is less when compared to the region. With the conflict that engulfed the entire social fabric, violence has crept even into the minds of children. Militants, fighters, and killers have become role models for children who are expected to be the future leaders of the country, she said.

She expressed the view that there are no ‘short cuts’ to prevent gender based violence. A total development of women would eventually lead to less violence. She said in order to reach a ‘win-win’ situation it will be necessary to engage men as partners in gender development.

Adding to these observations on the state of gender violence in **Sri Lanka**, **Ms. Champa Ku Yapa Abeywardane, from the Agromart Foundation**, observed that much of the higher decision making is done by males and is therefore influenced by male values. As an example of the success of women’s groups’ activism, she cited the instance when police had to agree to set up “Women and Children’s Desks” in all police stations which were to be handled by trained women police officers.

The country paper presentation on **Maldives by Ms. Fiunaz Waheed of FASHAN** observed that women in Maldives face violence in various forms similar to women all over the world within their homes, public spaces, in the workplace, and within the community in general. Gender based violence greatly affects the overall mental, psychological and physical health of half the population and is a major constraint to women’s full participation in society and development.

Not enough research has been done and there is a lack of data on the prevalence and impact of gender based violence in the Maldives, she observed. Research can be a starting point to bring the issue into the public eye, making it difficult for governments and civil society to ignore it, she said.

She also observed that instances of domestic violence had increased in Maldives after the Tsunami disaster.

In her presentation, **Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD, India** observed that since the 1980's, women's movement in India has worked towards change in legislation as an instrument to protect women against violence. The government of India has responded to it with several law reforms. Currently the UPA Government has brought out **The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; The Protection Against Sexual Harassment of Women Bill, 2005** and is soon to introduce a Bill in the Lok Sabha, **The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2006**.

Ms. Kavita Srivastava, Resource Person, gave an overview on **Policy, Legislative and Advocacy on Gender Based Violence**. In this regard she said that women's movements, the judiciary and the law enforcement machinery of the police have begun to collaborate to make justice accessible to women. An outcome of this collaboration has been the elaborate provision of legislative measures and the creation of Crime Against Women cell to redress such violence. As far as legislative measures are concerned the government responded by adding several provisions to the Indian Penal Code and Indian Evidence Act in 1983 and 1986, she said. She added that if laws are created to "protect" women, they are done "within" the system. This, in turn, reinforces culturally legitimized social hierarchies. She suggested that what is required is "appropriate behavioural and social changes" along with efficient enforcement of laws.

Field Visit

The participants of the Workshop made a field visit to Village Phagi District, Jaipur Rural to witness ICPRD's Project '**Men as Partners for Combating Gender Based Violence**'.

ICPRD youth clubs enacted a street play in Rajasthan to work out strategies and communication channels / methodologies for creating mass awareness for combating gender based violence. In this workshop, 12 SAARC Representatives, 70 young men of ICPRD youth clubs (Rajasthan), ICPRD staff, Village Leaders from 5 districts assembled at Jaipur enacted street plays, training techniques, imagery theatre to understand the issue and together develop mechanisms for sensitizing the community on

Gender Based Violence.

The workshop came up with certain **suggestions and recommendations**:

- Media needs to be constantly monitored on stereotyped portrayal of women.
- Laws that discriminate against women should be reviewed and reformed.
- Mandatory and relevant training and orientation should be provided to doctors, police, judiciary to enhance their understanding of violence against women, its causes and consequences.
- Community responses aimed at transforming prevailing traditional attitudes and norms are necessary to ending impunity for violence against women.
- Poverty alleviation and micro-credit schemes should provide special windows of support to target groups including victims of violence.
- Affirmative Action to increase the participation of women in the political process should be encouraged.
- Strengthen the linkage between the women's movement and the national machinery for the advancement of women.
- Strengthen women in leadership and decision-making.
- Increase access to education for women and girls.
- Increase women's access to and control over economic resources.
- Increase women's access to health information and women's control over their own bodies.
- Improve women's self-esteem and sense of personal power.



Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICPRD, India, welcoming the participants at the SAARC Regional Workshop on Gender Violence. Also seen are NGO representatives from SAARC countries. October, 2005



प्रधान मंत्री
Prime Minister

New Delhi
01 July, 2005


Dear Dr. Azad,

I have seen your draft report on converting "outlays to outcomes".

It is an impressive piece of work and would certainly help both the Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry in monitoring expenditure and ensuring that the desired outcomes actually materialize.

Wishing you success in your endeavours.

Yours sincerely,


(Manmohan Singh)

Dr. Nandini Azad
Head, Programme Outcome &
Response Monitoring,
Planning Commission,
Yojana Bhavan,
New Delhi

A Decade of Service in Activist Advocacy 1996-2006

ABOUT US

The Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development, (ICPRD) has evolved since 1996 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.

In the last ten years, over 6480 participants from the categories listed below have contributed to the above advocacy and intermediation process through interface & coalescing systems in over 21 states of India. These are:

- ❑ About **880 small rural NGOs from 153 districts across 21 states** of India have been involved in various activities (around 181 activities).
- ❑ **60 Senior State Development Managers** such as Secretaries / Joint Secretaries of Rural Development, Such as Planning

Commission (Deputy Chairman / Member Secretaries / Members), Banking, Small Scale Enterprises Ministry / Depts. of the Government of India, P.M.O. apart from bankers, financial institutions (NABARD, SIDBI, RMK) Statutory bodies Minorities Commission (Chairperson), NHRC (Member); Autonomous bodies such as NLI, NIPCCD, NCERT, BIRD, CAPART, CSWB etc.

- ❑ **57 MPs, legislators etc in India and 11 SAARC / European MPs.**
- ❑ 80 Technical experts / Academia, universities
- ❑ 190 members of the National / local media
- ❑ Distinguished Police officers, security personnel, eminent academicians/intellectuals.

Interventions

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

1. Undertaking coalition/alliance building as a strategy for pro poor advocacy and mobilization. Linking the national/policy level – with grassroots initiatives with a view for the poor to contribute and participate in decisions that govern their lives (policy changes).

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

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

3. Identifying, interfacing and training NGOs at the state level through a consultative process, thus developing district and state level NGO alliances /social capital especially for 'accessing' and generating a demand; and building capacity to monitor poverty programs at village / tehsil / district levels. Training to build advocates

and groups in unserved areas to generate a demand for resource transfers in poor communities. (or marginalized constituencies)

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

5. Strategies for reintegration of specific constituencies such as trafficked women, youth, dalits, tribals (including primitive tribals), bonded child labour, drought affected suicide victims (economic & social). Umbrella federation with over 880 NGOs currently linked to poor and remote locations - identified, interfaced and coalesced (detailed database often available for such groups with ICPRD).

ICPRD niche areas to recap are:

- *Umbrella federation with over 880 NGOs currently linked to poor and remote locations in India's poorest areas - identified, interfaced*

and coalesced (detailed database often available for such groups with ICPRD).

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

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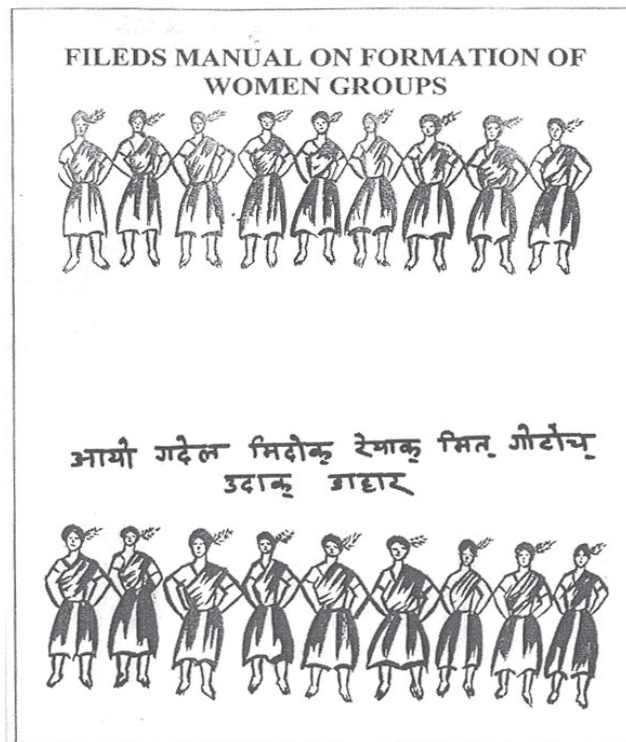
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ICPRD integrates tribal women into financial institutions through local Santhali language
Field Training Manual on Self Help Group (SHG) formation



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