



CUTS-Centre for Human Development (CUTS-CHD)

PACE

Participation and Action towards Community Empowerment

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A view of SHGs Meeting in Progress at Bhilwara

Self Help Groups-Bhilwara

CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD) organised the final Project Implementation and Monitoring Committee (PIMC) meeting on the Self Help Groups (SHGs)-National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) project at its Bhilwara office on April 05, 2007. The project is supported by NABARD, Bhilwara.

The NABARD-aided project on the formation of 200 SHGs in Mandalgarh and Banera blocks of Bhilwara district has been completed. Till date, CUTS CHD has been able to form successfully a total of 202 SHGs.

The meeting was attended by H S Shekhawat, Assistant General Manager, NABARD; Akhilesh Vashist, Lead Bank Manager; G S Johri and B K Sen, Bank of Rajasthan; and K C Agarwal, Central Cooperative Bank. Amit Chowdhury, Madan Giri Goswami and Ganga Dadhich of CUTS CHD attended the meeting. In the meeting, the two-year

project on SHGs was reviewed. Initiatives taken by CUTS were appreciated.

The work on micro-finance initiatives taken by government departments and CUTS were discussed in detail. The Committee felt that CUTS' work has been more effective than those of other agencies. All the bankers present at the meeting decided to brief their higher authorities about the initiatives of CUTS with recommendations to start a partnership with CUTS on micro finance in the villages.

The PIMC members recommended NABARD to continue the partnership with CUTS. A new proposal on formation of 800 SHGs (400 each in Bhilwara and Chittorgarh districts) has been submitted to NABARD, Jaipur office.

CUTS CHD discussed SHGs capacity building and training on livelihood opportunities in the PIMC meeting. It was felt that more work needs to be done in this area.

Self Help Groups

Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women in India have been recognised as an effective strategy for the empowerment of women in rural as well as urban areas to bring women together from all spheres of life to fight for their rights. Through SHGs, women can work on a range of issues such as health, nutrition, agriculture, forestry, etc., besides income generation activities and seeking micro credit.

SHGs usually comprise women who voluntarily gather at a specific place for a specific purpose sharing a common interest or problem. An ideal SHG consists of 15-20 members. Small groups allow for participatory discussion, which may be difficult in a larger group with diversified interests.

Objectives

The objectives of SHGs are to:

- socially, economically and culturally empower women;
- help women gain independence and security;
- build self-confidence and self-esteem;
- offer opportunities for education and self-improvement;
- offer community development activities which are planned; and
- improve the lives of individual.

Activities

SHGs engage in income-generating livelihood projects like small shops, tea shops; flower, fish, sari and milk selling; leaf-plate, phenol, candle, umbrella, toy, soap, snack and curry powder making; provision stores; cycle renting; coconut leaf thatching; tailoring; cattle rearing; pig and poultry farming. Besides, they are also involved in social action programmes such as HIV/AIDS awareness, healthcare education, family planning, family welfare, water and sanitation, rainwater harvesting, environmental issues and education programmes.

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Consumer Awareness Programme (CAP) Launch Meeting

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) in association with Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan and with the support of CUTS CHD is implementing a Consumer Awareness Programme (CAP) in selected 20 blocks of 10 districts of Rajasthan. CUTS CHD organised a launch meeting in Chittorgarh under the Project on April 07, 2007.

The skills training programme for selected representatives of two blocks of Chittorgarh district was also clubbed with the launch meeting. The activities,



A guest speaking at the Launch Meeting

which are to be conducted under the programme over a period of one year include: skills training programmes; consumer friends training; awareness campaigns on specific burning issues

related to consumer protection; and awareness rallies.

In the launch meeting, Rajendra Singh Shekhawat, Additional Collector, District Information Officer of Chittorgarh, and G P Bohra, District Supply Officer (DSO) were the distinguished guests. Rajeenish Pitalia, Chandmal Garg and Prahlad Rai were the three lawyers who facilitated different technical sessions on Consumer Protection Act (COPRA) and other related laws. Hari Prasad Yogi and Gangadhar Solanki were the other two speakers in the sessions on advocacy and consumer rights.



Participants at the two-day Orientation Programme

Safe Motherhood, Reproductive and Child Health Programme (Joffe Charitable Trust)

Survey on "Identification of Gaps in Safe Motherhood, Reproductive and Child Health" started on May 15, 2007 in Bhilwara and Chittorgarh districts. A two-day orientation programme for surveyors was organised on May 11-12, 2007. About 21 surveyors attended the orientation programme. All surveyors were

selected from the target area and have the experience in carrying out such survey work. 17 surveyors from Bhilwara district (six from Banera block and 11 from Mandalgarh block) and four surveyors from Chittor block of Chittorgarh district participated.

The orientation programme had the following objectives:

- to orient surveyors on the survey process and type of questionnaire; and
- to sensitise surveyors on health issues of women and children.

The final survey started on May 15, 2007. CHD team was divided in two groups. One team headed by Madan Lal Keer was given responsibility to cover Chittor block and the other team headed by Madan Giri Goswami was given responsibility to cover Banera block. A new comprehensive questionnaire has been prepared for the survey to assess the Mother and Child Health Care Services. Suggestions to the questionnaire were received from two experts in the area of health services: Dr Rajendra Joshi and C M Saxena. All relevant suggestions were incorporated in the final questionnaire. Under the programme, the survey work was conducted from May 15 to June 12, 2007. About 2260 respondents were interviewed. A total of 29 surveyors were included in the final survey. Among them, four were Masters in Social Work (MSW) students, seven were CHD staff members and 18 were local people.

Capacity Building Training of SHG Leaders

Capacity Building Training of SHG Leaders was organised for members holding post in SHGs on Register Maintenance and Documentation at Government Middle School, Kamalpura under Banera block of Bhilwara district on June 25, 2007. Among the resource persons in the programme were Kartar Singh Meena, Sub Divisional Magistrate, Banera; H S Shekhawat, AGM, NABARD, Bhilwara; Amit Chowdhury, Madan Giri Goswami, Ganga Dadhich, Shiv Lal Prajapat from CUTS; Sangeeta Sahani from Bhilwara Dairy; and Lalita from Kamalpura.

During the training programme, post holders of SHGs were briefed about the aims and objectives of SHGs, importance of register maintenance and documentation, and were trained to overcome the problems. A future course of action was prepared during the training.

MNGO Programme

Bhilwara

The activities of the Mother NGO (MNGO) scheme have been started at Bhilwara with the support of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. District level officers were approached and contacted through letters for the preparatory phase under the MNGO scheme and were made aware of the objectives and the proposed activities under the project. In the meantime, a request was made for their support and coordination in the effective implementation of the project.

An advertisement was released in the local newspapers (Rajasthan Patrika and Lok Jeevan) for the selection of Field NGOs (FNGOs). The installment of Rs 1,00,000 for the preparatory phase work under the project has been released. A request has been made to interested NGOs to submit their expression of interest with requisite documents.

Chittorgarh

The final draft proposal was submitted to the Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI), New Delhi for reviewing purpose and suggestions. After receiving suggestions from VHAI, they were incorporated in the proposal. The final proposal duly signed by District Reproductive and Child Health Officer will be submitted to State Reproductive and Child Health Society, Jaipur.



SRIJAN Network

Reproductive and sexual health problem among adolescents has been a concern for decades in Rajasthan. Government agencies along with NGOs and donor agencies have been working on the issue but due to lack of coordinated efforts, the desired results were not achieved. To achieve the same, there is a need to create an enabling environment for young people and educate them. With the vision of dealing the reproductive and sexual health problems of adolescents, through youth forums, CUTS CHD joined the SRIJAN-Young People's Reproductive Sexual Health and Rights (YRSHR) Network, Rajasthan. SRIJAN Network was established by MAMTA Health Institute for Mother and Child, New Delhi in October 1999.

The main aim of this network is to raise awareness among the youth to deal with the reproductive and sexual health problems; and create national youth forums. Through these forums, information is being provided to youth on reproductive and sexual health so that they could overcome the problems. MAMTA Health Institute for Mother and Child, with the support of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) is working in association with 150 organisations in seven states of India viz. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Issues to be Addressed

- Early marriage and early pregnancy
- Lack of awareness among youth about reproductive organs
- Sex discrimination



A view of the orientation and capacity building programme

Areas of Operation

The organisation will work in five villages under Banera block of Bhilwara district. The target villages are Kamalpura, Kajlodiya, Salriyakala, Laxmipura and Kherliya.

A two-day Block level orientation and capacity building programme of youth leaders was organised on June 23-24, 2007 in the Government

Upper Primary School, Kamalpura, in Banera block of Bhilwara district. About 40 youths participated from Kamalpura, Kajlodiya, Salriyakala, Laxmipura and Kherliya villages. Ganga Dadich and Shiv Lal Prajapat organised the programme. The purpose of organising the programme was to orient youths towards the programmes of *Nehru Yuva Kendra* and National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and enhance their awareness level on health issues. Jaswant Kanwar from *Nehru Yuva Kendra* and Shayam Lal Vijayvergiyee, Block Education Officer, Banera block, Bhilwara were the resource persons for the training programme.

On the first day of the orientation programme, after the registration of the youths they were informed about social discrimination; HIV/AIDS; reproduction and sexual health problems; and the ill effects of the early marriages and early pregnancy.

On the second day, youths were provided a brief glimpse of the work done under the NRHM for the youth. A number of questions raised by the participants were answered, including a discussion on the role of the youth in the proposed activities under the SRIJAN Network.

Rally on International Anti-drug Day

CUTS CHD in association with District Administration, Chittorgarh organised a rally on the theme "Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking" to mark the International Anti-drug Day, on June 26, 2007. CUTS CHD used wooden plates and banners with slogans as an expression of its determination to strengthen the rally. A seminar was also organised on drug addiction at the Sanwaria Rest House, Chittorgarh.

In the seminar, the District Collector P L Agarwal, while rating drug addiction as the worst habit in the society, opined that it ruins health, wealth and soul of the users, and the once-happy families reach the stage of destruction. While addressing the school children, he said that they should work towards encouraging their family members, relatives, neighbours and people from villages and cities to eschew drug consumption. Madan Giri Goswami of CUTS CHD emphasised the need for strict control over abuse of drugs in the society. P L Agrawal lauded CUTS' efforts in working incessantly towards creating awareness in this regard.



Rally on International Anti-drug Day

Vermi Compost Pit

A vermi compost pit was built in the CUTS CHD campus as a part of physical work under the National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC). About 35 Kgs of fertiliser was taken out from the pit during April-June 2007, which is being put to experimentation through its use in vases and plants of the CHD premises.

Devendra Kumar Paliwal of CUTS CHD is taking care of the compost pit and from time to time, he is receiving guidance from Ratan Lal Khateek, Assistant Professor, *Krishi Vigyan Kendra*, Chittorgarh.

Consumer Information cell

During April-June 2007, the consumer information cell of CUTS CHD has received 13 complaints. In response, the concerned authorities were intimated through letters and eight cases have been resolved through mutual consent.

CHD REPRESENTATIONS

- On April, 05, 2007 Amit Chowdhury attended the PIMC meeting of NABARD sponsored SHG project at its office in Bhilwara.
- On April 16, 2007 Amit Chowdhury and Manoj Dixit attended a district level meeting at DRCH Convention Hall, Chittorgarh. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the issue of child marriage and plan to stop it.
- On April 25, 2007, Madan Giri Goswami attended a meeting on water conservation at DRDA Convention Hall, Chittorgarh.
- On April 26, 2007, Madan Giri Goswami attended the workshop on NGO, organised by NABARD, Chittorgarh. Sudhanshu Kumar, AGM, NABARD, Chittorgarh briefed about NABARD Projects and discussed the scope of CUTS partnership with NABARD.
- On April 28, 2007, Madan Lal Keer attended a meeting at District Health Committee to discuss problem of vitamin deficiency in children.
- On April 28, 2007, Amit Chowdhury met Mukesh Lath, Country Programme Manager, SC-Finland and discussed the possibility of its partnership with CUTS. He also met Sanjay Nirala, Programme Coordinator, SC-UK and discussed CUTS and SC-UK partnership.
- On May 15-16, 2007, Ganga Dadhich attended the Srijan Network Training workshop organised by the State Institute of Health and Family Welfare (SIHFW) in Jaipur to orient network partners on youth policies and programmes on adolescents.
- On May 18, 2007, Amit Chowdhury attended a workshop on SHG Project Development. H S Shekhawat, AGM, NABARD, Bhilwara briefed about the NABARD Project and discussed the scope of CUTS' partnership with NABARD.
- On May 28, 2007, Amit Chowdhury attended the Regional Workshop on "Promotion of Rural Non farm activities" organised by NABARD, Regional Office, Jaipur.
- During June 18-21, 2007, Madan Giri Goswami attend a workshop on "Formation of SHG Cluster" organised by National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) at Indore, Madhya Pradesh.
- During June 18-21, 2007, Ganga Dadhich attend a workshop on "Formation of Youth Clubs" organised by MAMTA, New Delhi. The purpose of the workshop was to orient participants towards formation of youth club at village, block and district level & sensitise them on early marriage and early pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.
- On June 25, 2007, Amit Chowdhury and Madan Giri Goswami visited Bhilwara to meet District Collector, Chief Medical Health Officer, District Project Manager & District Supply Officer at Bhilwara. They also attended an orientation programme under NABARD Project with SHG members organised by CUTS CHD.

VISITORS

- Sanjay Nirala from SC-UK, Jaipur visited CHD with Bandana Shewstha, Regional Programme Coordinator and Sibghatullha Ahmed, Research Associate, SC-Nepal on April 05-06, 2007. They visited Bilola and Medi Ka Amrana villages to study the functioning of *Bal Panchayats*.
- Four MSW students visited CHD for their summer internship: They are Nimisha Sharma and Harjinder Kaur (Department of Social Work, Jain Vishva Bharti University Ladnun, Nagaur, Rajasthan); and Rajani Srivastava and Arun Gehlot (JRN, Rajasthan Vidyapeeth University, Udaipur, Rajasthan).
- Anoop Khinchi and Surender Kumar, RAS-2007 batch visited CHD on June 09-10, 2007. They are in probation period and undergoing training with different departments. CUTS was selected for orienting them on NGO matters.

PUBLICATIONS

CUTS CHD has been engaged in the publication of resource and information materials since 1991. The aim is to disseminate information on issues of people's concern at the grassroots level and to support its interventions by providing knowledge-based modalities. Some select publications are:

Books and Training Manuals

- Soochna Hi Shakti Hai* (Information is Power)
- Logon Tak Nyaye* (Justice for People)
- Sasakt Nari Sudrid Samaj* (Empowered Women Robust Society)
- Jaiv Vividhta Ke Samvaahak Guni* (Traditional Healers are the agents of Bio-diversity)
- Alakh Jaga Hai Gaon-Gaon* (Awakening in the Rural India)
- Khuli Khidkian Khule Darwaze* (Open Windows and Open Doors)
- SamooH Ki Kahani Mahilaon Ki Zabaani* (The Success Stories of SHGs by the Women Members: In Process)

