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International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Woman

By resolution 54/134 of 17 December 1999, the General Assembly designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and invited governments, international organisations and NGOs to organise activities designated to raise public awareness of the problem on that day. Women's activists have marked November 25 as a day against violence since 1981. This date came from the brutal assassination in 1960, of the three Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic, on orders of Dominican ruler Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961).

Statistics paint a horrifying picture of the social and health consequences of violence against women. For women aged 15 to 44 years, violence is a major cause of death and disability. In a 1994 study based on World Bank data about 10 selected risk factors facing women in this age group, rape and domestic violence rated higher than cancer, motor vehicle accidents, war and malaria.

In Indian, violence against women has been rampant since time immemorial. Women experience a multitude of forms of violence. From household to offices to buses and on roads, a woman feels hardly safe. In the name of socio-religious sanctions, women have been suffering various types of violence and discrimination. Domestic spousal violence against women in developing countries like India is now beginning to be recognised as a widespread health problem impeding development. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that one of every three women around the globe has experienced violence in an intimate relationship at some point in her life. The Vienna Accord of 1993 urged all governments to prioritise the elimination of violence against women.

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Prasanna Khameshara speaking at the International Day for Elimination of Violence against Woman

Eliminating Violence against Woman

A seminar was organised on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Woman at CUTS CHD on November 24, 2007. Speaking on the occasion, Prasanna Khameshara, Additional Superintendent of Police, Chittorgarh said that social evils like conservatism, abortion of female foetus, *Nata Pratha* (a system of illegal marriage in rural Rajasthan) can be eliminated through collective efforts. There is also need for the establishment of awareness committees on local levels to check violence against women, so that problems could be solved at the local levels. Calling the need for a greater role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and voluntary organisations, Khameshara said that whether it is the police or the NGOs, the focus should always be saving the family problems rather than breaking it. He further added that women have to pay the price due to lack of knowledge about the ground realities related to *Nata Pratha* in the state. He called caste *panchayats* to come forward to put an end to this social evil.

In his speech, RC Dad, General Secretary of Kishore Nyaya Board,

Chittorgarh said that family tradition transfers from generation to generation and people have received family tradition since time immemorial following which they can reduce violence against women. Piyush Trivedi, President District Congress *Yuva Morcha*, Chittorgarh opined that due to communication gap, disagreement among members do crop up, which lead to strained relationship. Hence, the people should work towards ending the communication gap. Amit Chowdhury pointed out the importance of education for women and said that an educated woman educates the whole family and works to ward off the possible atrocities through intellectual acumen. Arti Joshi, the president of *Anubhuti Sira*, called for the establishment of a pressure group of women in the society. She also emphasised the need for discussion and counselling on issues of violence against women.

In this seminar, 37 participants, which included representatives of NGOs, social activists and women Self-Help Groups (SHGs), took active part.

PROGRAMMES & INTERVENTIONS

Orientation-cum-Training Programme for FNGOs

The orientation-cum-training programme for Field NGOs (FNGOs) was organised at CUTS CHD campus from November 20-24, 2007. The purpose of the training programme was to orient FNGO workers about Mother NGO project and facilitate them on method of carrying out a survey for identifying the gap of health services in designated unserved and underserved areas of Bhilwara district. Three workers each from three FNGOs out of four Field NGOs participated in the training programme. *Mewar Sewa Sansthan*, *Gharib Nawaz Mahila Avam Bal Kalyan Samiti* and *Prayas Sewa Sansthan* attended the workshop. *Vikalang Kalyan Sahayata Samiti* did not attend the workshop. Reproductive and Child Health Officer, Bhilwara, Yashpal Singh and District Programme Manager, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Bhilwara Neeraj Jha visited CHD on November 20 and talked with trainees.

During the training programme, trainees were asked to carry out a mock survey in Bilola village and problems faced during the survey were sorted out later. After the training, FNGO representatives went back to their field area and started the survey work. Three NGOs (*Mewar Sewa Sansthan*, *Gharib Nawaz Mahila Avam Bal Kalyan Samiti* and *Prayas Sewa Sansthan*) have finished their survey work. Madan Lal Keer and Ganga Dadhich from CHD visited field areas and provided technical inputs FNGOs.

Mother NGO Programme in Chittorgarh

The final proposal has been submitted to State Reproductive Child Health (RCH) Department, Jaipur on July 05, 2007 for their approval. Once State RCH Department approves the final proposal, the memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed between CUTS and Chief Medical Health Officer Chittorgarh. After sanctioning of the next amount, project activities will be started.

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 350 kg of compost was taken out from the pit during October-December, 2007, which is being put to experimentation through its use in vases and plants of the CHD premises.

Environment Awareness Week

Under Wild Life and Environment Awareness Week (October 01-07, 2007), a seminar was organised jointly by CUTS CHD and District NGOs on the theme, "Role of NGOs in Environment Protection" on October 03, 2007, at CUTS CHD campus. Speaking in the seminar, RS Nathawat, Deputy Forest Officer, Wild Life said that NGOs should



RS Nathawat as speaking at the seminar.

take on the onus of generating awareness and sensitising people about the protection of wild life animals. He suggested for promoting women empowerment in the present context to realise the goal of protecting wild life animals.

NS Modi, President of District NGOs said that due to lack of population control measures, the agriculture land has increased at the expense of forest land, which is a matter of concern. Mahesh Jain, Bureau Chief of *Rajasthan Patrika*, called for greater facilitating role of the people in the protection of environment. Amit Chowdhury pointed out that CUTS has been working on the grassroots for the protection of environment for more than a decade. There were 46 participants in the seminar, which include representatives of NGOs, government officials and social activists.

Maternal Health Care by Joffe Charitable Trust

The data compilation of Joffe Charitable Trust survey work has been finished. The analysis part will be started after completion of the fact sheet work.

Bharat Nirman People Information Campaign Exhibition

CUTS CHD, with assistance from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), participated and put up stall at "Bharat Nirman People Information Campaign Exhibition" at the local Dussehra Mela Ground, Chittorgarh on October 24-28, 2007. In the exhibition, works of NGOs from Chittorgarh and Bhilwara districts were highlighted. Posters and banners depicting the women empowerment, *Panchayati Raj Act*, Consumer Protection Act, education, health and environment etc., were displayed. However, the special attraction of the Campaign Exhibition was CUTS' banner displaying the women empowerment: "self help groups (SHGs) towards self-reliance".



CUTS campaign at the exhibition

Also, CUTS publications such as, *Gram Gadar*, *Aage Badhno Hossi* (Women Marching Ahead), *Rajasthan Mein Upbhokton Ki Sthiti* (Status of Consumers in Rajasthan), *Panchwa Stambh* (Fifth Estate), *Sadiyon Se Mila Mahilaon Ko Dusra Darja* (Second class status to women since time immemorial), *Bhrashtachar: Ek Nazar Mein* etc., were displayed for a wider information dissemination. CUTS staff provided free counseling to men, women, children and children on SGHs, public distribution system (PDS), and consumer issues. Rural People were made aware of important issues through question-answer programme, music, dance and puppet show.

Seminar on World Food Day

CUTS CHD, in association with District Supply Office, Chittorgarh organised a one-day seminar on “Right to Food” at CUTS CHD campus on October 16, 2007. TS Marwah, Chief Manager, District Industry Centre, Chittorgarh, said that every right is associated with every citizen, but according to class and caste, food and living habits of people are different. JP Agarwal, District Supply Officer, Chittorharh, opined that in food distribution system, the allocation of food grains for everyone should be same so that everyone gets equal benefits. Asha Sharma, Deputy Manager, Dairy (Bhilwara-Chittorgarh), while terming malnutrition as the biggest problem of the country, said in spite of the leading producers of milk in the world, India has million of children who are denied milk. Amit Chowdhury pointed out the need for a comprehensive plan of action on the “Right to Food”.



Workshop on the Quality of Education

A two-day orientation workshop for the surveyors on the quality of education was organised at CUTS CHD on October 12, 2007. *Pratham* Rajasthan carries out Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) every year to take stock of the quality of education in the State. Sheela Kumar of *Pratham* told that the organisation, with support from NGOs, does the survey every year to analyse the current status of education. Kumari Pushpa called for the need to know that every child is going to school and receiving quality education. Shahid and Madan Giri Goswami of CUTS informed about the ASER questionnaire and village mapping. After the training, 30 villages from the Chittorgarh district were selected randomly in which ASER survey was carried out. Under the survey, school survey, village mapping, family survey and test for children were conducted. About 30 surveyors of Chittorgarh district took part in the workshop.

CUTS Stall at Pushkar Mela

CUTS CART and CUTS CHD jointly put up a stall on citizen awareness, good governance and development titled, “RTI Advisory & Facilitation Stall” during November 17-24, 2007, at Pushkar Mela, in Ajmer district. Through exhibition stall, CUTS promoted the rural development schemes/policies of the government, including the grassroots interventions being made by CUTS. Among the visitors were: Sarita Gena, *Ajmer Zila Pramukh* (Ajmer District Head), the PRI

members, tourists from different regions of the country and abroad, officials from different departments of government and rural citizens. The visitors sought information about the RTI Act and were also keen to know about CUTS’ work towards good governance.

National Consumer Day

To mark the National Consumer Day, CUTS CHD, jointly with District Supply Office, Chittorharh, organised a seminar on the theme, “Aware Consumer is an Empowered Consumer” on December 24, 2007. Addressing the Seminar, Narbada Bhambi, Additional District Education Officer (Primary) called for the need for a better education opportunities to girls, so that the dream of an aware consumer society could be realised.

Speaking on the occasion, Jai Prakash Agarwal, District Supply Officer, said that consumer training are ensured in the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, but people can avail these rights only if they follow their duties. Dr Bhagwat Singh Tanwar of *Aravali Jal and Paryavaran Sewa Sansthan*, Chittorikhera pointed out that fake commodities are being sold along with the real ones in the market, which is difficult for the common people to decipher.

Kalyani Dixit, the Principal of the Government Girls High Secondary School, Chittorgarh, said that before buying a product, consumers should pay attention to its quality. Madan Giri Goswami briefed the role played by CUTS in raising awareness among the people.

Awareness Rally on AIDS Day

CUTS CHD organised a School Talk and Awareness Rally to mark the AIDS Day at Government Middle School, Sahanwa (Chittorgarh) on December 01, 2007. In the School Talk, Rajeshwari Meena, *Pradhan* (head) of *Panchayat Samiti*, Chittorgarh said that in addition to education, children in the rural areas should be made aware of HIV/AIDS.



A view of the rally

Chaturbhuj Jat, member of the *Panchayat Samiti* that youth should come forward to make the dream of creating AIDS free society true. Highlighting the significance of World AIDS Day, Madan Lal Keer said that the number of HIV/AIDS patients is increasing in the country and it is a big concern that youth are mostly affected with the disease. And it is a cause for concern that the disease is taking the toll on youth class.

An awareness rally was flagged off by Rajeshwari Meena and Chaturbhuj Jat. In the rally, the students of Government Middle School, Sahanwa, raised slogans on HIV/AIDS awareness. A total of 90 participants took part in the rally, which included school teachers and students, representatives of *Panchayat Samiti* and CUTS CHD staff.

CHD REPRESENTATIONS

- On October 04-05, 2007, Amit Chowdhury visited Udaipur to attend a workshop on 'Improving the Livelihood of the Tribal People through Natural Resource Management-based Interventions' organised by Central India Initiatives (CINI) in partnership with BAIF Development Research Foundation, Pune and with financial assistance from Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT), Mumbai.
- On October 08-10, 2007, Amit Chowdhury visited Hyderabad to attend a workshop on 'Thematic Meet on Investing in Young People for Achieving Millennium Development Goals' at NISCET organised by MAMTA, in partnership with Navjyothi, Hyderabad and with financial assistance from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Riksförbundet För Sexuell Upplysning (RFSU) Sweden.
- On October 22-25, 2007, Madan Giri Goswami visited Centre for Environment Education (CEE) Ahmedabad along with Dharmendra Chaturvedi to attend the regional level meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to select NGOs for implementing the biodiversity conservation under National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC) project.
- On November 01-04, 2007, Madan Lal Keer and Ganga Dadhich visited Jaipur to attend the Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme for MNGO project partners organised by Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI), New Delhi.
- On 12 November 2007, Amit Chowdhury visited Hyderabad to attend a 'Sector Workshop on Right to Sustainable Livelihood/ Natural Resource Management (NRM)' organised by Core Country Programme Evaluation – India team in coordination with Centre for People's Forestry at National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium, Enterprises (NIMSME).
- On November 16, 2007, Ganga Dadhich attended a workshop on Mother & Child Care at Bhilwara. The workshop was organised by Action Research and Training for Health (ARTH), Udaipur.
- On November 24, 2007, Seema Yagnic participated in a workshop on Child Marriage and Girl Foeticide organised by WomenPowerConnect (WPC), New Delhi at State Institute of Health & Family Welfare, Jaipur. During the meeting, issues related to violence against women were discussed.
- On November 26, 2007 Amit Chowdhury and Madan Giri Goswami attended a consultation meeting to discuss various aspects of proposals to be submitted under Community Based Programme (CBP, experimentation phase) of Indo German Watershed Development Project (IGWDP). The meeting was organised by NABARD for all watershed project partners. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss physical and financial aspects of Pre-CBP activities.
- On November 27-30, 2007, Amit Chowdhury visited Colombo to attend the 8th Annual Symposium on Poverty Research organised by Centre for Poverty Analysis, Sri Lanka. The theme of the symposium was 'Communicating Research and Influencing Change'. He presented a paper on 'Policy Change and Community Participation: The case of Bal Panchayats Approach.'

VISITORS

- On November 14, 2007, Manoj Kumar Rawat, Programme Manager, Project Management Unit, IGWDP-NABARD, visited CUTS CHD. It was a routine visit to all NGOs whose watershed proposals have been selected for further action. Amit Chowdhury and Madan Giri Goswami joined him for a discussion on watershed project. CUTS has submitted proposal for two watershed areas, which have been selected for further consultation by NABARD.
- On November 20, 2007, Dr Yashpal Singh, RCH Officer and Niraj Jha, District Programme Manager (NRHM), Bhilwara visited CHD to attend the Orientation-cum-Training Programme for FNGOs under MNGO, Bhilwara project. During their visit, they interacted with the trainees and requested them to be serious about the training programme.
- On December 26, 2007, Bipul Chatterjee attended a review meeting at CHD. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss administration, financial and project activities of CHD.

