

Multi-stakeholder Approach to Quality Education

CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD), with support from Save the Children, UK is implementing a project, 'Improving the Quality of Elementary Education Project' (IQEEP) in 25 villages of Chittorgarh district of Rajasthan. The project aims to improve quality of education in 27 government schools in Chittorgarh district and ensure increased stakeholders participation inclusive of children in education planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Since the local administration and media have been considered as part of the stakeholders, CUTS CHD brought them on the same platform to share the findings of a survey on quality education carried out in 25 project villages and find out way to promote quality education through discussion.



Amit Chowdhury addressing media representatives and representatives from district administration

In this context, CUTS CHD organised a District Level Orientation-cum-Consultation workshop on quality education for policy makers at its premises on September 25, 2008, in which 39 participants attended. The purpose of the workshop was to sensitise local leaders and district administration and devising mechanism for supporting government and NGO initiatives in promoting quality education.

A District Level Orientation-cum-Consultation workshop on quality education for media was organised at CUTS CHD on September 26, 2008, in which 16 people from local electronic and print media attended. Representatives from *Rajasthan Patrika, DainikNav Joyoti, Jan Agni, Jan Nayak, Rastra Dut, Panjab Keshri, Daspur Darshan, ETV News*, etc., along with Suresh Chandra Sharma, Additional District Education Officer (ADEO), *Sarwa Sikhsha Abhiyan* (SSA) Chittorgarh shared their views on quality education.

The findings of the survey were discussed and suggestions were sought from participants on how to improve the standard of education. The survey findings showed that schools do not have toilet; water facilities; teachers coming late; and drop out rate especially of girl child. Media was very critical on the survey findings and raised concern on efforts of SSA. The ADEO requested the media to play constructive role and join hands with the local administration and CUTS to sensitise people on the issue.

CUTS Work for the Children

CUTS, as an organisation, has always been at the forefront of creating better citizens through education, advocacy and capacity building. Whether it is empowerment of girl child or creating awareness about tobacco use among children or highlighting the effects of junk food among them, CUTS has conceptualised and implemented projects since 1995 in order to ensure that children get their due rights.

For example, CUTS, in 2001-06 implemented a project entitled, 'Rural Girl Child Empowerment Programme' (RGEP) in selected villages of Chittorgarh and Bhilwara district with support from Save the Children, UK. In 2005-06, it implemented a project 'Hum Bhi Bachche Hai (We, too, are Children)' in selected schools of Jaipur to highlight the plights of child domestic workers. The organisation has also implemented a project 'Tobacco: Deadly in Any Form or Disguise' in Jaipur city to highlight the use of tobacco products among children.

CUTS' association with Save the Children-*Bal Raksha Bharat* is the latest initiative to work towards improving the standards of school education in Chittorgarh district. Save the Children UK was registered in India in 1975, while in 2004, it got registered as an Indian NGO in the name of *Save the Children-Bal Raksha Bharat*. Like Save the Children, CUTS respects and values each child and works for their better future.

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Self-Help Groups

The Centre, in association with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has been implementing the project entitled, ‘Self Help Groups’ (SHGs). The project aims to ensure socio-economic development and enhance livelihood security in rural areas.



Members speaking during SHG training programme

Under the project, an Orientation-cum-Training Workshop for new animators was held in the respective fields by the field officers. Those *Gram Panchayats* were replaced with new *Gram Panchayats* where the villagers were not cooperating and showing no interest towards the project. Few new villages were selected as well. Acquaintance was made with local banks and required assistance & guidance was taken in opening SHG bank accounts.

Field officers were mainly engaged in community mobilisation and environment building. Local banks were contacted and sought assistance & guidance in opening SHG bank accounts. SHG data list has been updated. The software has been developed to generate information at the district, block, *panchayats*, village and SHG level. Information related to individual members can also be extracted from the software.

SHG meetings in villages of Gangrar, Nimbahera & Chittour blocks of Chittorgarh district and Mandalgarh, Banera & Suwana blocks of Bhilwara district were also organised during July-September 2008.

Improving the Quality of Education

Under the project ‘*Quality of Elementary Education (IQEE)*’ a series of meetings were held with the local community, school teachers, local leaders, *Panchayati Raj* members and local youths. The purposes of the meetings were to discuss educational problems of the area. In the meetings, various activities were carried out for spreading the message of quality education, such as wall painting, and slogan writing etc.

Campaigns on child education, child rights and violence against children were organised; and puppet shows were held in government primary schools. Cultural programmes were organised in target villages, and through dance, songs and short drama, local problems were highlighted among local people, which was aimed to seek their cooperation in achieving the objectives.

The survey on quality education, including data compiling work in 27 schools of 25 villages was accomplished during July-September 2008. The findings from the survey will be shared with the district administration.

Bal Shabha & Bal Panchayat meetings were held regularly in all project villages. It has been decided to pick one topic relevant to children and held discussion on it. During the discussion, CUTS CHD representatives share information on the topic through songs, play and other mode.

Capacity Building on Electricity Reforms

CUTS CHD has been one of the partners at the grassroots in assisting CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) for implementing the project entitled, ‘Capacity Building on Electricity Reforms in Bangladesh, India and Nepal (RESA)’ in Rajasthan. The objective of the project is to enhance the long term capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) so that they could play better role in the policy formulation and regulatory decision-making process in the electricity sector.

During July-September 2008, the Centre helped in finishing the survey and submitted the findings to CUTS CART, Jaipur. Based on the feedback from CUTS CART, necessary action was taken to procure missing information. Survey questionnaires and other relevant information were also sent to CUTS CART.

SGSY – Chittorgarh

The group formation under the *Swarn Jayanti Grameen Swa Rojgar Yojna* (SGSY) micro credit project was continued during July-September 2008. Regular meetings were organised in Nimbahera, Gangrar and Chittour blocks of Chittorgarh district.



Bal Kishan Chawla, Project Officer-SGSY Chittorgarh imparting training to SHG members

The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the local problem and orient local community about the project and importance of saving. As local community has been cheated earlier by workers of Integrated Child Development Programme (ICDS) and NGOs, the Centre’s staff faced problems in convincing the community to form groups; and helped organised a number of meetings involving local animators, elder people and youths and created an environment for group formation. A few groups have been formed as a result and bank accounts have been opened in local banks. In most of groups (NABARD & SGSY), the average saving is Rs 100 per member per month.



Strengthening Capacity of SHG Members

Under the SGSY scheme, training programmes were organised for SHG members in Chittor, Nimbahera and Gangrar blocks of Chittorgarh district.



Rajeshwari Meena, addressing SGSY SHG member at Gharwara village

The training programme in Nimbahera block was held on September 22-23, 2008 at *Panchayat Samiti Parisar*, in which 33 SHG members from 3 SHGs participated. The Project Officer-SGSY, Chittorgarh; Block Development Officer, Nimbahera block; Bank Manager, Central Cooperative Bank; Block Coordinator, SGSY; local NGO representative and *Panchayati Raj* Institution (PRI) member attended the programme as resource persons.

The training programme in Chittorgarh block was held on September 24-25, 2008 at CUTS CHD, in which 69 SHG members from 6 SHGs participated.

Another training programme for 7 SHGs of Chittor block was held at Gharwara village on September 27-28, 2008. Rajeshwari Meena, *Pradhan*, Chittor block and representative from *Krishi Vighyan Kendra* were present along with local school teachers and village leaders. In all, 72 SHG members attended the meeting. A two-day training programme at Gangrar block was held on September 26-27, 2008 in Gangrar in which 76 SHG members from 7 SHGs attended the training programme.

CHD Advisory Board Meeting

CUTS CHD Advisory Board meeting was held on August 08, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to apprise the board members about the Centre’s programme & project activities. The meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the Advisory Board, Metha Lal Mehta, Chairman, Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods (RMOL). Bhanwar Lal Sisodia, Senior Advocate and Indramal Sethiya, Chartered Accountant were the two members present in the meeting. Navaratan Patwari, a social worker; Dr Chetan Khamesra, Environmentalist Hindustan Zinc; Jai Prakash Bhatnagar, a social worker running school in Chittorgarh; and Dinesh Joshi, an NGO worker and Kanyani Dixit, Principal, Government Girls School, Chittorgarh were special invitees.

Amit Chowdhury welcomed all participants on behalf of CUTS and presented the status of all ongoing programmes as well as future projects. The achievements and problems were discussed in detail and suggestions were sought from the committee members. The Board members and other participants praised Centre’s initiatives in various fields.

Mother NGO (MNGO) Project

The draft composite proposal of Bhilwara-MNGO project was submitted to Regional Resource Centre-Voluntary Health Association of India (RRC-VHAI), New Delhi for their feedback. The project has been planned to improve the Quality of Reproductive and Child Health Services (Mother & Child Health Family Planning, Adolescent Sexual & Reproductive Health Prevention and Management of Reproductive Transmission Infection) in un-served and under-served areas of Shahpura, Mandal and Suwana blocks of Bhilwara District during 2008-2011. The duplicate copies of final composite proposal of Chittorgarh-MNGO project was submitted for sixth time to State RCH office Jaipur for the approval.

A New Beginning

The livelihood of Kanjar community is practicing burglary/robbery/crime. In order to change their criminal profession, CUTS was approached and a district team was formed to draw a plan for their rehabilitation. A team including CUTS’ Superintendent of Police (SP), Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), and community leaders was formed for community dialogue and rehabilitation programme for Kanjar community members who will surrender before the police.

After a series of meeting, 19 people surrendered at a function organised by CUTS CHD at the Government High School, Kapasan, Chittorgarh, on July 16, 2008. DIG, Udaipur range, SP & ASP, Chittorgarh, other police personnel, leading advocate Sishodiya, Nav Ratan Patwari, social worker, local community leaders and people attended the function. The Kanjars were taken to the local court to file their cases. While seven Kanjars were freed the next day, others were kept under court remand till paper work is finished. The District Administration has assured to create future opportunities for these people.



Kanjar community members who surrendered before the police

Consultation Workshop of NEAC

One day consultation workshop was organised at the Centre on August 08, 2008 for seeking application for National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC) programme. The workshop was attended by NGOs from Udaipur division. The theme of the campaign is ‘Climate Change’ for the year 2008. The Centre has decided to engage local schools in the implementation of the programme for better results. Application from 25 schools from Chittorgarh has been submitted to CUTS CART.

CHD REPRESENTATIONS

- On July 15, 2008 Amit Chowdhury attended the consultation meeting of District Committee of *Nehru Yuva Kendra*, Chittorgarh at the District Committee office. The purpose of the meeting was to review the progress and prepare a future plan of activities for *Nehru Yuva Kendra*.
- On July 21, 2008, Amit Chowdhury attended a consultation meeting of MAMTA-New Delhi and Plan International organised by *Seva Mandir*, Udaipur at Jaipur. The purpose of the meeting was to draw a plan of future activities for Sexual and Reproductive Health Initiative for Joint Action Network (SRIJAN) project.
- On July 23, 2008, Amit Chowdhury and Madan Giri Goswami attended the SGSY, Project Committee Chittorgarh meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to review the progress of SHG work in the district for the month of June 2008.
- On August 12-13, 2008, Amit Chowdhury and Madan Giri Goswami attended the international conference on 'Global Partnership for Development: Where we do stand and where to go?' organised by CUTS CITEE and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (FICCI) in New Delhi.
- On August 18 2008, Madan Giri Goswami along with 15 grassroots volunteers of CUTS CHD attended an 'Assembly of Grassroots Change Makers' at the Birla Auditorium as part of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of CUTS. The theme of the Assembly was 'Role of Civil Society in Good Governance'.
- During August 25-29, 2008, Amit Chowdhury, Madan Lal Keer, Neetu Joshi and Madan Giri Goswami attended a training programme on 'Improving the Quality of Elementary Education' organised by Save the Children Jaipur at Jaipur. The purpose of the training programme was to orient participants about identifying child-led indicators for quality education.
- On September 02, 2008, Madan Lal Keer attended the MNGO project consultation meeting organised by State Reproductive & Child Health (RCH) office, Rajasthan and RRC Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI), New Delhi, at Jaipur
- On September 18-19, 2008, Amit Chowdhury attended the Project consultation meeting of IQEEP organised by Save the Children at Jaipur.
- On September 17, 2008, Lokendra Pandya attended the NABARD-Bankers meeting at Bhilwara to discuss problems faced by NGOs during account opening and loan procuring for SHGs.
- On September 29, 2008 Amit Chowdhury & Madan Giri Goswami attended the District SGSY Review Committee meeting held at *Zila Parishad* to review the progress of SHG work and problems faced during the month in the field.

VISITORS

- A team of 38 people including 30 children from *Jeevan Jyoti Family Helper Project* (JJFHP), a partner organisation of Christian Children Fund (CCF), MP visited the Centre during July 25-29, 2008 to learn from our *Bal Panchayats* initiative.
- Metha Lal Mehta, Chairman, RMOL; Bhanwar Lal Sisodia, Senior Advocate; Indramal Sethiya; Chartered Accountant; Navaratan Patwari, Social Worker; Dr Chetan Khamesra, Environmentalist, Hindustan Zinc; Jai Prakash Bhatnagar, Businessman running schools in Chittorgarh; Dinesh Joshi, NGO, worker; and Kanyani Dixit, Principal, Government Girls School visited CUTS CHD to attend Advisory Board meeting on August 08, 2008.
- Nitu Shahi, Programme Coordinator, Save the Children, Jaipur visited the Centre, on August 08, 2008 to review the IQEEP project. She met with IQEEP project staff and visited project villages to interact with stakeholders.

INTERNSHIP

Ishupal Singh Kang and Kanishka Sewak from Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala, Punjab have successfully finished their internship on July 12, 2008. Ishupal Singh Kang worked on Save the Children funded IQEEP Project, while Kanishka Sewak worked on Kanjar Rehabilitation initiative project.

