



Mainstreaming Disability in Development

With the goal that 'No person in Chittorgarh district remains needlessly blind and those with irreversible blindness or low vision should have the same rights and access to services as their sighted counterparts', CUTS Centre for Human Development has partnered with Sightsavers to implement Chittorgarh District Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) project, the MoU of which was signed in July 2010. The duration of the project is of three years.

The core strategy of the project, jointly developed by CUTS and Sightsavers, is to strengthen the ongoing government initiatives so as to ensure that persons with disabilities (PWDs), children with specific needs and persons with curable eye diseases have a better access to the services. The project is intended to make PWDs aware about their rights and responsibilities and mobilise them into groups so that they can collectively ensure that their rights are protected. Once the PWDs are identified and provided with the basic facilities such as disability certification and mobility training, it is expected that their access to the services will be better and the system be more acceptable to them.

Mainstreaming Disability – Need for Collective Action

A meeting with Chittorgarh Viklang Manch was organised at the Centre on September 02, 2010. The objectives of the meeting were to revitalise the defunct Chittorgarh Viklang Manch; and promote their ownership of CBR Project. More than 120 participants, including 82 PWDs attended the meeting.



Udai Lal Gadri, representative of Chittorgarh Viklang Manch lamented the fact that PWDs still remain excluded in their own homes, society and from most of the developmental schemes. He called for solidarity among all PWDs to jointly work for ensuring their rights.

Prabhat Sinha, Programme Manager, Sightsavers, Jaipur stressed on the importance of education and collective action by PWDs in mainstreaming them. Ketan Kothari, Programme Officer, Sightsavers, Mumbai said that disability is a status and not a disease. The simple impairments of persons are complemented by attitudinal, informational and environmental barriers to make one person disabled.

Development Schemes and Disability

A District level stakeholder consultation on 'Development Schemes and Disability' was organised by the Centre in Chittorgarh, on September 03, 2010. The purpose of the meeting was to sensitise district level officials, CSO representatives and youth about the inclusion of PWDs in developmental programmes of the government. Ashish Tripathi shed light on the condition of PWDs in the society.

Prabhat Sinha made a presentation on the need of inclusion of PWDs in developmental schemes to achieve Millennium Development Goals. Ketan Kothari said that all schemes and programmes meant for disabled should be designed only in partnership with them.

Amarsingh Kanawat, Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Chittorgarh, who was Chief Guest on the occasion, underlined the importance of collective action by all the stakeholders for the betterment of PWDs. More than 56 participants attended the meeting.



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Biodiversity Conservation Ingrained in Indian Ethos

The Divisional Level Workshop of the Udaipur division under the National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC) 2011 was organised at the Centre on August 13, 2010. The objective of the workshop was to orient the participants on the theme for NEAC 2011 and provide assistance in filling up of proposal forms. K R Kala, District Forest Officer was the Chief Guest. More than 62 participants, including schools and NGOs, attended the workshop. Vandana Chouhan of CHD while welcoming the

guests emphasised on the importance of conservation and management of biodiversity.

K R Kala stated that conservation and sustainable use of biological resources based on local knowledge systems and practices is ingrained in Indian ethos. The country has a number of alternative medicines, such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathic systems, which are predominantly based on plant-based raw materials in most of their preparations and formulations. Dharmendra Chaturvedi of CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training said that the goal of biodiversity conservation cannot be accomplished without community participation.

Role of Micro Credit in Poverty Alleviation

CUTS CHD is implementing two projects in Bhilwara and Chittorgarh districts on micro credit for poverty alleviation to ensure socio-economic development and enhance livelihood security in rural areas. The projects are being funded by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

Bhilwara NABARD PIMC Meeting

Bhilwara NABARD Project Implementation & Monitoring Committee (PIMC) meeting was held at Bhilwara on July 15, 2010. The purpose of this meeting was to review the progress of the project and discuss future plans/activities. Ashish Tripathi, Acting Centre Co-ordinator, CHD, presented the highlights of the project. S K Shaw, Regional Manager (outgoing), Baroda Rajasthan Grameen Bank (BRGB), Bhilwara stressed on the need of creating some replicable models in the project by promoting linkages of Self Help Groups (SHGs) with livelihood training institutions.

Chittorgarh NABARD PIMC Meeting

Chittorgarh NABARD PIMC meeting was held at CHD on September 28, 2010 which was attended by members of the committee.

The PIMC members congratulated CUTS for making good progress in SHGs formation and credit linkages.



Grassroot Consumers in Action

CUTS CHD under the project entitled, 'Grassroots Reachout & Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action' (GRANIRCA) organised two public interface meetings (PIMs) at Bhupalsagar and Dungla of Chittorgarh district of Rajasthan.

Bhupal Sagar

The Centre jointly with *Upbhokta Soochna evam Paramarsh Samiti* organised a PIM at Bhupalsagar, Chittorgarh on September 26, 2010. The purpose of the PIM was to create awareness about the Consumer Protection Act (COPRA), 1986 among grassroot networkers so that they can help other rural folks in using this law and share the common problems faced by consumers with public representatives. Ashish Tripathi provided a brief history of CUTS and presented an overview of the GRANIRCA Project and objective of the PIM. Shankar Lal Bairwa, MLA, Kapasan lauded CUTS' efforts in taking the cause of rural consumers forward. He stated that GRANIRCA project could be utilised better to prevent consumers from unfair practices and ensure justice to them. Purshottam Tak Sarpanch, *Gram Panchayat*, Bhupalsagar and Mitalal Ranka expressed their views. More than 40 participants attended the meeting.

Dungla

The Centre jointly with *Nehru Yuva Sansthan* organised a PIM at Dungla, Chittorgarh on September 27, 2010. Chetan Mal Nagori, Block Education Officer, was the Chief Guest. Ashish Tripathi while welcoming the guests provided a brief introduction of CUTS and the GRANIRCA Project. Gangadhar Solanki, District President, *Akhil Rajasthan Upbhokta Sangthan Mahasangh* discussed the importance of the COPRA, 1986 and the Right to Information (RTI) Act in preventing consumers from unfair practices and promoting good governance in the country. Chetan Mal Nagori stressed on the need of building a grassroots consumer movement to promote good governance in the country. More than 50 participants attended the meeting, out of which 10 were women.

Welcoming Children to Schools



The major focus of the work under the project *Stronger Voice to Excluded Children in Government & NGO Policies and Programmes* was to get the children, who were part of Pre-primary campaign, enrolled in schools and continue the practice of celebrating *Pravesh Utsav* (function for child enrolment in school). The Centre organised functions in 28 villages. The purpose of the functions was to welcome the un-enrolled and dropout children, admit them in schools and raise awareness among parents and villagers on importance of education.

The focus of the *Praveshotsav* was also to link the school with *Panchayati Raj Institutions* (PRIs) to ensure sustainability of such initiatives. The best part of this campaign was that school bags, slates, pencil, rubbers, erasers and other eatables could be mobilised from the PRIs of the six *Gram Panchayats* covered under the project, which in monetary terms is more than ₹30,000. The campaign also bridged the gap between the school and *Panchayats*. Many headmasters discussed the problems faced by them which could be easily resolved by community participation/support of the *Panchayat*.

Increasing Awareness – Initiative of *Bal Panchayat*

During July-September 2010, some unique initiatives were taken by the members of *Bal Panchayat*, which demonstrates their increasing understanding of the village-level issues and their involvement and deliberations to reach to a solution which is sustainable. Children in *Sawa ki Dhani* contributed voluntary labour to make the road smooth so that that the school-going and small children could reach the school and *Anganwadi* centre in time. Children in *Rel ka Amrana* wrote a letter to the *Sarpanch* of village requesting installation of one hand pump in the village so that the problem of potable drinking water in school could be resolved.

Another initiative was taken by *Bal Panchayat*, *Netawalgarhpachali*, where children presented various problems in the village *Gram Sabha*. The ever-increasing enthusiasm of children to participate in the development process and make the delivery of government programmes at the grassroots more inclusive is clearly apparent. The media has also supported the efforts made by the children, by giving wide coverage to these initiatives.



Strengthen Consumer Movement at the Grassroots



One District Level Training Workshop (DLTW) was organised by the Centre under the GRANIRCA project in Chittorgarh, on September 06-07, 2010. The purpose of the DLTW was to impart training, capacity building and orientation to block level networkers on relevant consumer protection issues, facilitate strong consumer movement at the grassroots, by ensuring an enabling environment for protecting consumer interests, which, in turn, would contribute towards the national interest, by way of equipping the consumer activists with skills and create a network of zealous grassroots activists. More than 42 consumer activists from 11 blocks of Chittorgarh participated.

Ashish Tripathi welcomed the guests and stressed on access to adequate information and proper understanding about the redressal mechanism/procedure for underprivileged classes to get justice. Briefing the participants about the GRANIRCA project, Nikita Srivastava of CUTS CART, said that the project will fill the need by furnishing proper information, methodology, procedures and approachable redressal mechanism to the people, so that a set of activists gets acquainted with grievance redressal system for speedy, inexpensive and effective justice in the project district, which will further support underprivileged classes in their respective blocks.

The training was devoted to build an understanding on COPRA. Shyam Sundar Sharma, District Supply Officer, Chittorgarh, highlighted major schemes and programmes of his office and, on request from block level consumer activists, he agreed to involve CUTS block-level networkers in the block-level vigilance committees.

CHD REPRESENTATIONS

- Madan Giri Goswami and Madan Lal Keer attended a meeting organised by Social Justice and Empowerment Department on August 09, 2010. The objective of the meeting was to analyse the work done for PWDs in Chittorgarh and chalk out the future plans. Aditi Mehta, Principal Secretary (Social Justice and Empowerment) and Commissioner, Disability was present during the meeting.
- Ashish Tripathi, Madan Lal Keer and Madan Giri Goswami met B N Sharma, Principal Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Rajasthan, in Chittorgarh on July 30, 2010. The main objective of the meeting was to improve the ante and post-natal care and also institutional deliveries so that the MMR could be reduced in Chittorgarh.
- Madan Lal Keer participated in the District Health Society meeting in Bhilwara on September 22, 2010. The purpose of this meeting was to review the progress of various health-related schemes and projects in the district. He made a presentation on the Mother NGO project.

VISITORS

- Ved Prakash Goyal, Associate Head, Rajasthan, IL&FS Cluster Development Initiative Limited, visited CHD on September 28, 2010. Ved briefed about the activities of IL&FS and requested for support in the identification of BPL youth for livelihood trainings.
- Rajeev Dhalwani of Muskaan Productions New Delhi, who came across the story of Ratni Bai Khatik (a CUTS networker who has been honoured with the Prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life by the Women's World Summit Foundation) on the CUTS website, visited CHD on July 29, 2010. Muskan Productions are in the process of compiling inspirational stories about women. The purpose of his visit was to interact with Ratni Bai Khateek and see the spots for shooting the documentary 'Why Can't I'.
- A team comprising Anshul Dureja, President-Corporate Operations and Chief Green Officer, Greenply Industries Ltd; Deepanjali Arora, Assistant CSR Manager, Greenply Industries Ltd.; and Ratna, Programme Officer, MAMTA, Jaipur, visited CHD on July 24, 2010. The purpose of the visit was to view the work done by CHD, in partnership with MAMTA, as a part of SRIJAN network. The visitors interacted with Durga, President, Bal Panchayat Ghaghsha; Asha Suthar, Bal Panchayat Shambhupura; and Vinod, Cultural Minister, Bal Panchayat, Samri. They praised the efforts made by CHD in empowering the children to stand up and speak against the social evils prevalent in their villages and also for promoting democratic values among children.
- Amit Chowdhury, Advocacy Officer, Save the Children, visited CHD from August 26-28. The purpose of his visit was to review the progress of the Save the Children-supported project *Stronger Voice to Excluded Children in Government & NGO Policies and Programmes*.
- Prabhat Sinha, Programme Manager, Sightsavers North-West India Area Office, Jaipur, visited CHD on August 03-04 and 10-11, 2010. The purpose of his visit was to facilitate the Module 1 training of the newly selected staff under the Sightsavers-supported CBR Project.

MEDIA