

Stronger Voice to the Excluded Children

*Stories we have lived and learned about
child rights development*



About Chittorgarh

Chittorgarh is an ancient town in the state of Rajasthan with a rich cultural heritage and abundant natural resources. Located in the south-eastern part of Rajasthan, Chittorgarh shares its border with other districts in the state, namely, Banswara, Udaipur, Rajasamand, Bhilwara, Bundi and Kota and on the eastern side it shares the border with Neemuch district of Madhya Pradesh.

Chittorgarh was the capital of former Rajput state “Mewar” which is remembered for bravery and valour of its rulers. The fort of Chittorgarh is spread in an area of around 2.8 km and is the largest fort in the country. Most parts of the district are hilly in nature and population is sparsely distributed. Availability of portable drinking water, like in most parts of Rajasthan, remains one of the biggest challenges for the people of the area. About 14 percent of the total population of the district is of schedule castes and another 21.5 percent of scheduled tribes.

In recent past, some cement and zinc production units have come up and the district is coming up in industrial map of the state. Yet the tribal residents and rural populations are yet to be benefited from these developments. Migration of labour remains a regular phenomenon as agriculture is not very developed in the district.

Chittorgarh ranks amongst the bottom eight districts according to the human development report 2007 with human development index of 0.558 and is amongst the districts of priority in the community development intervention. The total population of the district is 1.8 million spread over an area of 10856 sq. km.

About CUTS International & CUTS CHD

CUTS International: In 1983, CUTS, a rights advocacy group, began out of a rural development communication initiative, a wall newspaper entitled, “*Gram Gadar*” (Village Revolution). It regularly reaches far-flung and remote villages of the Rajasthan State and has been instrumental in providing a forum for the vulnerable communities and under-privileged classes to get justice. CUTS-International is working with mission of “Consumer Sovereignty in the framework of social justice and economic equality, within across borders”.

CUTS CHD: To facilitate intervention in ‘community based action programmes’ at the grassroots level, the “Centre for Human Development” (CHD) was established in the year 1991 in the village Senthil of district Chittorgarh. Ever since its inception, CUTS has been pursuing consumer issues and community rights based action programmes at the grass root level in three districts namely Chittorgarh, Bhilwara and Pratapgarh. CUTS CHD is working with the mission “To be an innovative centre for strategic intervention to raise the living standard of people”. CHD is working on five programme areas as below:

1. Empowerment
2. Good Governance
3. Health
4. Natural Resource Management
5. Child Rights

**Stronger Voice to
the Excluded Children**
*Stories we have lived and learned
about child rights development*

Supported by



Stronger Voice to the Excluded Children

Stories we have lived and learned about child rights development

Published by



Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD)

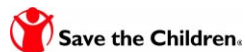
CUTS CHD, Rawala, Village Senth, Chittorgarh. Rajasthan 312 001

Ph.: 01472-241472, 235472, Fax: 01472-241472

E-mail-chd@cuts.org

Website: www.cuts-international.org/chd

With the support from



© CUTS, 2013

Printed by: M.S. Printer, Jaipur

ISBN 978-81-8257-205-8

#1332

Contents

<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Message from Save the Children</i>	<i>vii</i>
1. Evolution of the Framework on Child Rights	1
2. CUTS CHDs work with Children	3
3. Brief Introduction of the Project	5
4. Children Group Formation	7
Composition and Formation	7
Key Activities and its Process	8
5. Key Highlights and Impact	12
6. Achievements so far	14
7. Future Strategy	18

8. Case Studies	20
9. Conclusion	29
Advocacy through Media	31
Glimpses	32

Abbreviations

AWCs:	<i>Anganwadi Centres</i>
BLBP:	Block Level <i>Bal Panchayat</i>
BLOs:	Block Level Officials
CBOs:	Community Based Organisations
CPCs:	Child Protection Committees
DHS:	District Health Society
DLOs:	District Level Officials
DoSJE:	Department of Social Justice and Empowerment
GPLBP:	<i>Gram Panchayat Level Bal Panchayat</i>
IEC:	Information, Education and Communication
IPAP:	International Non-Government Organisation Partnership Agreement
IQEEP:	Improving Quality of Elementary Education Project
NCPCR:	National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
PRI:	<i>Panchayati Raj</i> System
PwDs:	Person with Disabilities
RGEP:	Rural Girl Empowerment Project

RSCPCR: Rajasthan State Commission for the Protection of
Child Rights

RtE: Right to Education

SHGs: Self Help Groups

SMCs: School Management Committees

SSA: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

UN: United Nations

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

VHSCs: Village Health & Sanitation Committees

WCD: Women & Child Department

Foreword

Child rights are specialised human rights that apply to all human beings below the age of 18. Universally child rights are defined by the United Nations and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). According to the UNCRC, child rights are minimum entitlements and freedoms that should be afforded to all persons below the age of 18 regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability and therefore apply to all people everywhere. The UN finds these rights interdependent and indivisible, meaning that a right cannot be fulfilled at the expense of another right.

The purpose of the UNCRC is to outline basic human rights that should be afforded to children. There are four broad classifications of these rights. These are: Right to Survival, Right to Protection, Right to Participation and Right to Development. These four categories cover all civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of every child.

Child rights are a set of principles or ideals. These are entitlements and some are justifiable in a court of law, but are not tangible. Protection is one of these rights. But child protection is more than a right. It is a framework or system by which the rights of a child can come to be. The framework consists of various duty bearers, such as the departments of the government, police, school, civil society, who all have roles to play to ensure that a child's rights are met, and in the case that a child's rights are violated

that the violator be brought to justice and care be provided to the child. Child protection is not only treatment, but should also be preventive. Risk management needs to take place to reduce the risk of violation of child rights in any given circumstance or space.

Child protection is hence the means through which all other rights of a child can be upheld. For example, a child has a right to live a normal childhood in a family environment. The child protection framework need to first take steps to ensure families are able to survive by providing them when health, education, and food for free or at minimal cost. The next step is to address the needs of children who have fallen through the cracks such as destitute, abandoned, and orphan children. The framework includes the mechanisms to relocate these children into caring families either through adoption or foster care and provide these children with access to health and education services. Hence, the framework is not a single ministry or government body it is the interlinking functions of all ministries and sectors.

UNCRC makes it incumbent upon the signatory States to take all necessary steps to protect children's rights enumerated in the Convention. According to Constitution of India, all persons, including those below the age of 18, are entitled to certain inherent and inalienable rights. India's commitment to International instruments such as UNCRC and its core principles of right of every child to survival, development, protection and participation, is reflected in numerous policies, laws and programmes being implemented in the country.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), which was set up in March 2007 under the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, is latest mechanism to ensure protection of children in India. The Commission's Mandate

is to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes, and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UNCRC.

CUTS is having long experience of working on child rights and protection issues for the last more than a decade.

This monograph published under the project ‘Stronger Voice to Excluded Children in Government & NGO Policies and Programmes’ implemented by CUTS Centre for Human Development (CHD) in Chittorgarh in partnership with Save the Children - Bal Raksha Bharat, with the objective to advocate for protection of child rights and inclusion of children, is an attempt to capture the key learning from the intervention for dissemination to a wider audience.

I take this opportunity to thank Save the Children for this partnership, especially thank Prabhat Kumar (State Programme Manager, Save the Children, Rajasthan) and Aprajita Mishra (Advocacy Coordinator, Save the Children, Rajasthan) for their guidance and support. I also thank our team at CHD, Dharamveer Yadav (Centre Coordinator, CHD) and the entire project team for the successful implementation of the project and also for their efforts in bringing out this monograph.

I also express my sincere gratitude to all, without whom the publishing of this monograph would not have been possible.

December 2013

George Cheriyan
Director
CUTS International

Message from Save the Children

The issue of dimension of social exclusion has largely been neglected in the conventional Indian literature. Indian society has been characterised by high degree of structural inequalities, satisfaction and hierarchy associated with caste, ethnicity, gender, religion, class, and other group identities. The inherent structure and functioning of these institutions leading to exclusion and discrimination invariably catalysed the need of setting up institution of local actors who could act as a catalyst to start the change process. The guiding considerations also accepted that the lack of knowledge- mainly empirical- on some aspects, if not all, on the dynamics of the institutions of caste, untouchability, ethnicity, religion, class and other group identities or institutions of exclusion and discrimination. As a result, children suffer the most.

Save the Children fights for the protection of children's rights world-over, with a focus on the most marginalised children. In fact all its resources are committed to improving the lives of socially excluded and other marginalised children. To expand its coverage and work with larger excluded groups, Save the Children with the financial support from Department for International Development (DFID), UK initiated a project entitled, 'Stronger Voice to Excluded Children in Government & NGO Policies and Programmes' under 'International Partnership Agreement Programme' in Rajasthan State along with six another states

(Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, Orissa and West Bengal) with four project partners.

Similar project is implemented by Consumer Unity & Trust Society in Chittorgarh District of Southern part of Rajasthan State. The overall goal of the project is to improve the status of the most socially excluded children in intervention area, with their voices heard and recognised institutionally by formal and informal structures. The project design is aimed to ensure that children have increased access to their basic rights in protection, food and education and reduction in child labour and a decrease in violence linked to exclusion and corporal punishment in schools and residential institutions. The project also expects children becoming active members of the village-level committee where duty bearers demonstrate their acceptance and integration of children voices on issues of exclusion.

Save the Children with the help of the children and the local community fought for rights of socially excluded groups and succeeded in creating an environment in which equity and equality prevail. The efforts of the local community and children have been inked in a book “Stronger Voice to the Excluded Children: *Stories we have lived and learned about child rights development.*” The book encapsulates successful efforts made by CUTS and community (especially) in villages of Chittorgarh district of Rajasthan to fight against exclusion. We are sure that readers will find the book very useful.

Prabhat Kumar
State Programme Manager, Rajasthan

1

Evolution of the Framework on Child Rights

In 1924, the League of Nations adopted the Geneva Declaration, a historic document that recognised and affirmed for the first time the existence of rights specific to children and the responsibility of adults towards children. The United Nations (UN), founded after the World War II, took over the Geneva Declaration in 1946. However, following the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the advancement of rights revealed shortcomings of the Geneva Declaration, which therefore had to be expanded.

On November 20, 1959, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted unanimously by all 78 Member States of the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 1386. However, neither the 1924 Geneva Declaration nor the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child defined when childhood starts and ends.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was developed in 1989 and is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights for children – civil, cultural, economic, political and social. It is a recognition by world leaders that children have human

rights and those under 18 years old often need special care and attention that adults do not. The Convention sets out these rights in 54 articles and spells the following basic rights that children everywhere have:

- the right to survival;
- develop to the fullest;
- protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation;
- and
- participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

The Convention protects children's rights by setting standards in healthcare; education; and legal, civil and social services. The core principles are:

- non-discrimination;
- devotion to the best interests of the child;
- the right to life, survival and development; and
- respect for the views of the child.

To date, only two nations have not signed the Convention. After ratifying the UNCRC, India changed its law on juvenile justice to ensure that every person below the age of 18 years, who is in need of care and protection, is entitled to receive it from the State.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in India was set up in March 2007. The Commission's mandate is to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes, and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also in the UNCRC.

2

CUTS CHDs

work with Children

CUTS CHD has a long experience in working on child rights and has been associated with Save the Children from 2002. “Rural Girl Empowerment Project” (RGEP, 2002-2006) was initiated in association with Save the Children in Chittorgarh and Bhilwara districts of Rajasthan to develop constituencies of children, especially girls, to tackle any form of violence or deprivation which they faced within and outside their communities. The effort succeeded in developing a model of good governance in this process.

After successfully completion of the RGEP project in the year 2006, another initiative ‘Improving Quality of Elementary Education Project’ (IQEEP) was taken up during 2006-2009 in the same two districts with the aim to work extensively on child empowerment and child poverty issues.

Every village in the project area has formed children collectives or groups in the age group of 6-14 years (both girls and boys). The project seek to improve the communities’ understanding of their responsibilities as citizens, and creation/re-establishment of strong networks with partnership of the relevant government representatives and locally active NGOs to improve child rights.

CUTS CHD is also currently running a child rights' project in Bhilwara named 'Child Line 1098' which works round the clock for children in need of care and protection in the district. 1098 is a toll free national child help line. Through this initiative, 11 children have been rescued from the clutches of child labour. Several meetings/workshops/trainings etc. towards sensitisation of child protection issues have been held.

3

Brief Introduction of the Project

With grant support from Save the Children - Bal Raksha Bharat, CUTS CHD is implementing ‘Stronger Voice to Excluded Children in, Government & NGO Policies and Programmes’ project in Chittorgarh block of Rajasthan, since April 2009. Socially excluded children (Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes) in 28 villages of Chittorgarh district in Rajasthan are targeted to benefit from the development programmes, policies and schemes of the government, donors and NGOs by end of December 2013.

The International Non-Government Organisation Partnership Agreement (IPAP) project aims at working with children to deliver immediate and lasting empowerment to them and thereby motivating them to fight for their rights hand in hand with the initiatives. The existing work of “Save the Children” is aimed at realising the rights of the extremely poor and excluded groups of children.

Under the programme, CUTS CHD conducted awareness and sensitising activities for the community as well as the government stakeholders in six *gram panchayats* in the Chittorgarh block. CUTS is also advocating to ensure child rights in 28 villages of intervention. It has formed a unique and scalable concept (best practices) where three-tier Children Collectives or groups are made on the lines of the *Panchayati Raj* Institution (PRI) system.

This concept aims at developing the abilities of children keeping in mind that they will be the future politicians, administrators, educators etc. These Children Collectives are working on important local issues, such as education, health & nutrition, village development etc.

4

Children Group Formation

The purpose of Children groups' is to make children conscious of their rights and encourage their participation in addressing issues such as child marriage, education, cleanliness of villages and health facilities. Further, these children, in turn, have been instrumental in making adults aware of their responsibilities. Some main objectives are:

- child development;
- increase participation of children in development programmes;
- provide a platform where they can enhance their creativity, talent, self-confidence, leadership quality and raise their problems or issues; and
- provide a healthy and didactic environment which induces creative and collective learning that leads to skill development of children.

Composition and Formation

Each group can be said to be a formal and active organisation of children for the children, by the children. Each group comprises 20 to 30 members, has a President and a Secretary democratically elected by the children of the respective villages. 11 to 18 years of children are part of it. CUTS has formed 28 such groups called *Bal Panchayats* in Chittorgarh block. With a view to increase its

focussed impact and to address the possibility of ineffective working each village has one *Bal Panchayat*.

CUTS has been successful in forming these *bal panchayats* on the pattern of the PRI three tier system. The first tier comprises village level *Bal Panchayat* (formed by *bal sabha* Members); the next is *Bal Panchayat* at the *Gram Panchayat* level and finally a *Bal Panchayat* at the block level. All three levels are responsible for work in their specific areas. There are 28 village-level *bal panchayats*; six at *Gram Panchayat* level and one at the block level.

Key Activities and its Process

To start with, a *Bal Sabha* is formed in which any child under the age of 18 years could be a part or member. *Bal Sabha* meetings are organised on a monthly basis and a person trained on child rights as well as community issues, facilitates the meetings. The agenda of the meeting is to decide upon the tasks, its plan of action and to assign a person to execute the decided tasks.

The *Bal Sabhas* select some children amongst them to form the *Bal Panchayat* (on the lines of *gram panchayats* under PRI called *Gram Panchayat Level Bal Panchayat* (GPLBP). All children selected for *Bal Panchayat*, are responsible to take up the issues that are raised by the *bal sabhas* and bring them up in the *Gram Panchayat* quorum meetings.

Each *Bal Panchayat* member is allotted a specific area for which they are responsible. They could play the role of the Health Minister, Environment Minister, Education Minister, Water and Sanitation Minister, *Bal Vikas* Minister etc. These *bal panchayats* are responsible to form their Block Level *Bal Panchayat* (BLBP).

The GPLBP select the candidates amongst themselves to be representatives in BLBP. The BLBP, in-turn, works on issues that are either not solved or taken-up by the GPLBP.

To impart knowledge on the formation and running of these children groups, orientation, training, exposure visits, interface meeting with various government and non-government departments are organised. Hand holding and other support is provided at each step on a regular basis. Some children have made their presence felt on the state and national level and have been awarded as well.

With help of these children, *Praveshotsav* (Mission enrollment) is organised to that ensure all children in the 28 intervention villages are admitted in schools. The Children Groups keep a track of children who are not attending school and drop-outs on a regular basis.

Immediately after the formation of GPLBP, a *Bal Samagam* was organised. This event saw a participation of around 300 ministers of *bal panchayats*. The basic objective of this *Bal Samagam* was to share the experiences of the *bal panchayats* and to develop a future strategy towards child friendly villages. An Information, Education and Communication (IEC) workshop was also conducted where around 85 children from BLBP participated. Various issues like ideal schools, ideal villages, ideal leaders, child marriage, child labour etc., were discussed in the IEC.

From April, 2010 till 2013 these Children Groups organised a campaign against child marriages in all the intervention villages. They managed to stop many child marriages successfully, including child marriages of their own siblings. District administration and PRIs are taking support of these groups to control such issues.

Child labour is a common practice in the socially backward regions. Even though it is illegal, families are forced to send their children to work because of their poor economic condition. The employers, in turn, also do not abide by the law and hence there are endless cases of child labour. To deal with this, Self Help Groups (SHGs) were formed within the families of these villages. They were encouraged to save on a daily basis and deposit the savings in the banks, so that after some time they become eligible to take loans from the banks for small requirements or their businesses.

Uptill 2012 since the inception of this scheme, two 'loan *melas*' have been organised under the SHG credit linkages programme. Loans were disbursed to the SHGs for starting small income generation activities and also to link them with banks and get loans on low interest rates.

In June, 2012 World Day Against Child Labour was celebrated and a Community Capacity Building Workshop on various topics was organised. In October 2012, World Girls Day and World Hand Wash Day was also celebrated.

Only glitch is about the technical feasibility, as all banks have to adopt a uniform kind of software to implement these provisions.

Key Challenges

- Child labour and their rehabilitation due to poor socio-economic condition
- Traditional customs, myths, conceptions, child marriage, *Nata Pratha*, dowry system, low level of education, seasonal employment, migration etc.
- Less importance on health and education
- Poor government infrastructure, non-cooperative attitude, non-specific political agenda
- Gaps and deficiencies in implementation of laws, policies, initiatives and apathy of decision makers

Frequently transfers/changes of District Level Officials (DLOs) and Block Level Officials (BLOs) pose a challenge in respect of continuity of rapport.

5

Key Highlights and Impact

- Work with children has resulted in women from excluded groups to participate in village level meetings, such as PRIs, Village Health & Sanitation Committees (VHSCs), School Management Committees (SMCs) etc., to raise their concerns.
- Members of Children's Groups are raising their issues from village to district level and even making their presence felt at the national level.
- PRI and community members have become more accountable in their jobs and services. They are providing effective support and supervision to community-based organisations (CBOs) and in the government-aided delivery mechanisms, such as *Anganwadi* Centres (AWCs), schools, sub-centre etc.
- A very clear difference between intervention and non-intervention areas can be seen with regards to functioning of local CBOs, such as VHSC, SMC, Child Protection Committee (CPC), Quorum meetings etc. All VHSCs, SMCs and CPCs are functioning effectively and are involved in developing their village health and school development plan on their own. These committees and Children's Groups have jointly taken a decision to provide a suggestion box in each school of the villages including in the *Gram Panchayat*.

- People are now willing to come together at one place keeping caste discrimination aside.
- After long and successful advocacy, the following facilities have been sanctioned – a sub-centre, drinking water facilities in schools, boundary walls for schools, school up-gradation, teacher’s appointment as per Right to Education (RtE) norms, village roads and drainage systems, school buildings etc.

6

Achievements so far

- In all 28 IPAP intervention villages SMCs have been formed, activated and trained towards their responsibilities. Now SMCs are preparing their School Development Proposals in their monthly meetings and will submit the same to the concerned authority. SMC members have started to participate regularly in SMC monthly meetings.
- Action on proposals submitted earlier, has started by the concerned SMCs. SMC in Gatiyawali, Chittorikhera, Surajpol, Eral and Chittori have got approved ₹1 lakh for each village from the MLA funds for construction of school boundaries.
- In IPAP intervention area, CUTS has provided training to VHSC members in each village. Most of the VHSCs are functional now and have developed their village health plan for the financial years 2012-13 and 2013-2014, and submitted them to the District Health Society (DHS) for approval of funds. Some VHSCs are doing outstanding work and their village health indicators are showing growth when compared to the last three years.
- To build the capacity and efficiency of these Children's Groups, various tools like trainings, orientations, exposure visits were undertaken along with providing hand holding support on a

regular basis. All the *Bal Panchayats* (both village and block level) have designated ministers amongst themselves working on various areas of concern like health, education, etc. The designated individuals are responsible for their respective departments and issues. These Children's Collectives hold monthly meetings for review and planning of further initiatives.

- Volunteers are trained at grassroots level to make the drive sustainable and fruitful. In all intervention villages, volunteers are selected and trained for child rights and other child protection issues. Almost 60 volunteers and 500 other community members have been trained. These volunteers are working for child rights independently and are prepared to take constant responsibility to drive the movement further, even after the completion of the project.
- There has been a decline in the number of drop out children and the cases of child labour. The enrollment in schools too has increased.
- With the help of SMC members, volunteers of Children's Groups are able to identify the gaps and issues and plan accordingly. All the members provide support to link the children with schools, raise their voices against child labour, stop child marriages etc. They are also involved in issues like promoting deliveries in medical institutions, promoting complete immunisation of both pregnant/nursing women and children. They monitor the *anganwadi* centres (AWCs), schools, sub centres etc. on a regular basis for proper utilisation of resources.
- *Gram panchayats* now invite suggestions from these volunteers and groups for village planning. It was because of the efforts

of these Children’s Groups that Suggestion Boxes are being installed in the schools of intervention villages. This initiative has led the Block Development Officer to issue circulars to *gram panchayats* to put up these suggestion boxes in their schools. SMC’s are also installing them in the schools of their respective regions with the help of the community and the *panchayats* in their region.

- Increase in cases of immunisation and institutional delivery through the capacity and skills of the *Bal Panchayat*’s members has been observed.
- Overall the effort has resulted in building trust and good relationship with the community as well as local stakeholders, besides linking the socially excluded groups with various government schemes.

Statistically, the achievements can be represented as under:

1	Schools in which CUTS is working through IPAP	:	34
2	AWCs in which CUTS is working under IPAP	:	42
3	Number of Children’s Groups formed	:	35
4	Number of Child Protection Committees (CPCs) formed	:	27
5	Children enrolled in elementary schools		9382
6	Number of drop-outs re-admitted in schools	:	432
7	<i>Number of children mainstreamed till now under IPAP</i>	:	
7a	Removed from child labour	:	768
7b	Child labourers enrolled in formal education	:	615

Contd...

7c	Vocational Training provided	:	61
7d	Others	:	92
8	Children linked with scholarship (SC & ST)	:	1999
9	Number of disabled children facilitated with disability aids	:	80
10	<i>Children benefited under IPAP (other than through scholarships)</i>	:	
10a	<i>Mukhyamantri Jeevan Raksha Kosh</i>	:	1
10b	<i>Palanhar</i>	:	80
10c	<i>Aapki Beti Yojana</i>	:	38
10d	KGAV/Shelter Home	:	9
10e	Child Immunisation	:	4060
10f	Open Exam	:	38
10g	Braille Kit	:	2
10h	Transportation Allowance	:	3
11	<i>Number of adults benefited under IPAP</i>	:	
11a	Old/Widow/Disabled Pension	:	3201
11b	<i>Janani Shishu Suraksha Yojna</i>	:	1177
11c	<i>Indira Awas Yojana</i>	:	289
11d	<i>Vishwas Yojana</i>	:	1
11e	Cataract operation	:	170
11f	Tri-Cycle & Hearing Impaired machine	:	12
11g	White cane	:	9
12	Number of cases in which discrimination reported and resolved in schools	:	38

7

Future Strategy

- Strengthening the work plan on education, health and nutrition for motivating people, particularly children, to adopt best practices and improve their health and education status.
- Better planning to educate and motivate people for active participation in PRI system and promoting good governance.
- Creating a child-friendly environment in villages where every child avails all four rights.
- Strengthening SHG movement to raise micro credit and good governance issues amongst the masses.
- Carrying out strong advocacy against child abuse and organising campaign for child rights and rights for Person with Disabilities (PwDs).
- The entire network and other village level functionaries, created over the years, to look after the sustainability of the project activities.
- The local members of Legislative Assembly would act as additional support structure for the project activities.

- The local level village institutions would act as a medium on continuing the project activities in their respective areas even in absence of the financial support.
- CHD has had a long association with the mentioned target areas and the field staff of the organisation would make frequent visits in the area regardless of the fact whether projects are available.
- The forum of children created at the village level will be linked with government supported forums at the block, district and state level.

8

Case Studies

School is Where Children Should Be

Poverty can be a roadblock to dreams, but there are times when even adversity cannot hold back one's aspirations. These stories cut across the country, and emerge from unexpected places. One such incident marked the life of Pushkar Lal Dangi, a 12-year-old child labourer who left behind manual labour and changed the condition of his existence and those in his village, enabled by the establishment of a *Bal Panchayat* and the support of community participation.

Pushkar comes from a Dangi family in Medika Amrana village of Chittorgarh district in Rajasthan. The village has about 200 households, most of which are dependent on agriculture and livestock-rearing, while some find subsistence working as casual labour in a nearby cement factory.

Pushkar lives with his father, mother and elder brother in the village. His family owns a small piece of land, whose yield is insufficient for their survival. To supplement his income, his father also drives a tractor for loading and unloading goods in and around the village. His mother works as a daily wage labourer in another farmer's field, making a pittance.

Pushkar's family recognised the value of good education and aspired to send their children to a private school, but they could only afford to enroll them in a government school. Not only this, since his father was the only regular earner, Pushkar was compelled to work alongside him on the land and at home. After returning from school around 12 pm every day, he would join his father in agriculture work. He worked in the field till evening. On most days, Pushkar would be too tired to study. Despite working all day after coming back from school, Pushkar kept his spirits high and exhibited remarkable resilience in the face of hardship. Though he wished to pursue his education unhindered, he did not let his aspiration come in the way of helping his family earn a living.

His parents did not wish their children to toil in the fields, but their financial condition was bad. A solution to this first presented itself with the identification of a local NGO worker and the constitution of a *Bal Panchayat* in the village. The *Bal Panchayat* was a forum of children of the village who would meet on a regular basis to discuss issues related to their lives, who were given a platform to voice their grievances, and were also apprised of their rights. As this process began to take shape in the village, Pushkar and his friends started attending the meetings and soon got involved with the collective.

During one of the meetings, the issue of children being out of school was brought up. Pushkar, who was present, was asked about his reason for working in the fields, and he told his story. Pushkar reiterated that he was not the only child in his village to work and support his family. There were a good number of children of his age working as child labourers and assisting their families in agriculture and household work. This inevitably resulted in absenteeism from school and affected their studies. When these

concerns came to the fore, the animator called for a community meeting in which the adults of the village participated. The issue of children working in the fields was again discussed. The village elders took immediate note of the matter and decided to meet Pushkar's parents. After some meetings, Pushkar's father agreed not to engage his son in agricultural work and also convinced his wife of the wisdom of this move. Pushkar was now free to pursue his studies, which he had always dreamed.

This incident set in motion many other meetings where the community representatives and members of the children's collective forced other villagers to withdraw their children from agricultural labour. Eventually, the community as a whole resolved that the villagers would not send their children to work and instead would encourage them to attend school. Since then, a significant change in the behaviour of parents has been observed, and the incidence of child labour in the area has reduced drastically. There are hardly any children to be found out of school now.

Pushkar is now the secretary of the *Bal Panchayat* of his village, as well as of the block-level children's collective, and has become a role model for others. He has also been instrumental in bringing out-of-school children and dropouts back to school. He has even campaigned to prevent child marriage in his village. In his personal life, he is aiming to finish his education with high marks and wants to pursue his dream of becoming an engineer. His parents are very supportive and are striving to help him achieve his ambitions. He is the biggest advocate of the campaign against child labour in his village and the neighbouring areas, and has influenced the lives and choices of many children in the process.

Motivated herself for Education

Pappu Rayka of village Dhani had left studying after class eight due to illness of her mother and her own accident. She came into the category of the disabled due to the accident. She was forced to abandon the school to look after her ailing mother.

Dhani is a village of Samri *Gram Panchayat*, located 13 km away from Chittorgarh. It is a small village and most of residents belong to Rayka community spread over about 150 households. Farming and rearing cattle is the main occupation of this village.

After inauguration of the project, activity was started to search eligible candidates for the post of animator in the target villages. In this endeavour Pappu Rayka was appointed as an animator in village Dhani. During this period, Pappu realised the importance of education and was determined to resume studies.

Pappu stated her desire to CUTS' representative who spoke to the school management about her admission. But the school refused. After more persuasion, the school agreed on the condition that Pappu should attend classes for three months regularly before she is formally admitted.

Pappu displayed her willingness to study and attended the school regularly for three months. Yet the school refused to give her admission.

CUTS took up the matter with the Additional District Education Officer (Elementary) who suggested filling the form of ex-student of 8th Class and advised Pappu to appear for the examination.

Pappu filled the requisite form and also inspired another girl for studying by filling up the form. She prepared for the exam with full devotion and achieved success. She joined a seminar organised by the National Coalition for Education in New Delhi and shared her real life success story in front of national level media. Now she is studying in 10th Class.

High-handedness of a Private Company

Village Sindhhwari is in Samri *Gram Panchayat* and is about 20 kms from the district headquarters at Chittorgarh. The 150 households in the village comprise mainly of *tailis*, *jaats*, *meghwals*, *rajputs* and *vaishnavs*. Their main occupation is agriculture labour. The village has a primary school (up to class eight).

In close proximity to the village and the school, Aditya Birla's cement company has limestone mines. The mining activity was causing havoc in the village with many households and the school developing cracks. Further, environmental pollution had started resulting in health problems, such as breathing difficulty. Due to mining, the community felt insecure and was reluctant to send their children to school. The company also took over grazing lands of the village thereby depriving supply of fodder to cattle, reduced farming outputs and attendant ill-effects on the cattle and other animals in terms of health. The school playgrounds were also captured by the company.

The School Management Committee wrote to the *Sarpanch*, the District Collector, the Chief Minister and others but did not receive any response. The Committee thereafter approached CUTS. CUTS and State Advocacy Coordinator of Save the

Children together took up the issue with Rajasthan State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (RSCPCR) and also involved the media.

As a result, in October 2012, the company carried out repairs on the walls and the toilet of the school. Efforts to make the playground available to the school are ongoing.

Innocent gets a New Lease of Life

During one of the field visits under one of the projects on child rights being implemented by CUTS CHD in Chittorgarh, the staff first met Udai Lal. Born in poor family in Samri, his mother had left him and married some other person. He and other two sisters were being brought up by their father when Udai started falling ill frequently. On examination, he was diagnosed with heart valve failure and needed immediate surgery for valve replacement involving lot of money. The poor family could not afford it. His life was in danger.

The fellow villagers approached their MLA, Surendra Singh Jarawat who was kind enough to write a letter to SMS hospital, Jaipur for free treatment. This yielded positive result and in April 2011, an amount of ₹95,000 was sanctioned for his treatment under BPL *Jeevan Raksha* Fund. Being illiterate and unaware, his father could not get the treatment of Udai done and suffering from poverty and ignorance, Udai's father passed away in April 2012. Being orphaned, Udai started living with his uncle, Prabhu Lal.

CUTS staff at Chittorgarh then took the responsibility of the treatment of Udai with the support from Save the Children and

approached the District Collector, Ravi Jain who wrote to the Chief Minister for funds under BPL *Jeevan Raksha* Fund. In June 2012, Jain also wrote to the Superintendent of SMS Hospital for Udai's treatment. With a copy of this letter, CUTS staff, Kailash Vyas, approached Dr. R.M. Mathur at SMS hospital who checked up the boy but treatment could not be started. CUTS then approached the Deepak Kalra, Chairman of Child Protection Committee and on his instructions, ADM contacted the SMS Hospital to start the treatment. However, in July, due to blood deficiency, the doctor could not operate upon Udai and asked him to come again after a months when his condition improved.

CUTS then approached State Child Rights Protection Commission and on their advice, Udai was shifted to Ashray Care Home in Jaipur. In the meantime, his uncle also left him in Jaipur and returned to Chittorgarh. But CUTS never left hope. On rigorous follow-up, Udai was operated upon on October 18, 2012 at SMS Hospital. The operation was successful and Udai got a new lease of life.

Rehabilitation of Two Girls

Soon after inauguration of the IPAP project, CUTS started work in the targeted villages, one of which was situated at about 18 kms from the district headquarters. Residents of the village spread over about 200 households were mainly involved with a cement factory or with farming. There was a Government Upper Primary School in the village with which CUTS associated for creating a *Bal Panchayat*. It was during a briefing session that CUTS was informed about a particular family in the village with serious problems resulting in drop out of a girl child from the school.

The girl's father became an alcoholic and started sexually abusing his daughter. The trauma left the girl mentally harassed and physically degraded and she stopped attending the school. On subsequent visits to the village, CUTS' staff met with the girl's mother who wanted the girl (and her other sister) to be sent to a residential school where she could be safe from the abuse and could continue her education. The mother did not report the matter to the police fearing loss of prestige for the family.

CUTS thereafter started working discretely but diligently with the Additional District Project Coordinator of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) by visiting the district Collector, the Women's & Child Department (WCD) and the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment. Success was obtained when the girls were admitted to a *Balika Grah* in Udaipur and the WCD also provided assistance of ₹1500 to the mother of the girls towards travel and other expenses. The girls were also admitted in a school near the *Balika Grah* in Udaipur.

The success, however, was short-lived as during the summer vacation when the girl came home to the village, she was kidnapped by a neighbour. Again, untiring efforts of CUTS and SSA with the police traced the girl in Gujarat from where she was rescued. However, the *Balika Grah* now refused to accommodate the girls and the mother started thinking of marrying the girls. With considerable effort, CUTS and SSA managed to change this mindset with active involvement of the community.

Resultantly, one of the girls is now in another residential school and the other in a nearby village and both are continuing their education.

The Story of Girija

A 17 year old girl, Girija, lives in village Amarpura under Samri *gram panchayat* which is about 20 kms from the district headquarter. The village has a primary school up to class eight, after which students have to go 8 kms away to Sawa for higher education. The *Gram Panchayat* of Samri was one of the targeted areas under the IPAP project.

Girija was elected as President of the village *Gram Sabha* and her mother was appointed as an animator by CUTS under the said project. Hence, both the girl and her mother were fully conversant with the issues of education of girls, child rights, etc. through their participation in *Bal Sabha* and *Bal Panchayat* meetings. They, therefore, turned down a good marriage proposal for Girija saying that they would consider her marriage only after she attains the age of 18.

Community organiser of CUTS met with Girija during one of his field visits and found out that she wanted to study beyond class eight. While her parents were agreeable but the neighbours raised the issue of a girl travelling 6 kms to and fro every day for pursuing studies. Girija's father bought her a bicycle to travel to school and he and his wife were proud that their daughter was the only girl of the village pursuing higher studies. She set an example for other girls of the village to emulate.

Girija now wants to complete her education and work as an Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) towards improving girls health and education.

9

Conclusion

The involvement of the PRIs and local people in the planning and execution of various project activities was the key component in determining the success of the project. Local involvement and leadership in the project increases its sustainability by maintaining the community's commitment to the project and by providing a means of accountability with the stakeholders.

Sensitisation programme for the *Panchayat* members, health workers, and school teachers had been organised so that they were able to take up the responsibility in protecting and realising the rights of the children belonging to their village/school. This had been done in partnership with the community members and *Panchayat* members so that they feel responsible towards making the programme successful along with the CUTS CHD.

Sustainability is an important outcome of this project whereby it seeks to improve the communities' self-worth, understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and creation/re-establishment of strong networks. By cultivating relationships with relevant government representatives and locally active NGOs, CUTS CHD and Save the Children, UK had been creating a source of on-going support. This includes technical advice, funding assistance and monitoring and evaluation.

Overall the concept under this project was very fruitful and in future CUTS would like to extend its scope beyond Chittorgarh.

Advocacy through Media

तन-मन से की गई सेवा ही बनती है पहचान
 भास्कर न्यूज़, चित्तौड़गढ़
 कर्तव्यों का निर्वहन तन-मन व निस्वार्थ

बच्चों ने सुनाई सफलता की कहानी
 भास्कर न्यूज़, चित्तौड़गढ़
 कन्दा की ओर से शिक्षण कार्यशाला में बच्चों ने समुदाय से प्री अपनी सफलता एवं सपने सुनाई।

आमुखीकरण कार्यशाला का आयोजन
 भास्कर न्यूज़, चित्तौड़गढ़
 कन्दा की ओर से शिक्षण कार्यशाला में बच्चों ने समुदाय से प्री अपनी सफलता एवं सपने सुनाई।

दिल्ली में आयोजित सेमीनार में शामिल हुआ चित्तौड़ का पुष्कर
 चित्तौड़गढ़, 24 जुलाई। सेव द चिल्ड्रन की ओर से 21 जुलाई को दिल्ली में आयोजित सेमीनार में विभिन्न राज्यों में बाल श्रम से मुक्त कराए गए बालकों ने भाग लिया, जिनमें एक चित्तौड़गढ़ के पुष्कर डांगी भी थे। सेमीनार के मुख्य अतिथि श्रीमती गुरुशरन कौर ने ब्रेकिंग प्री वॉइस आफ फोरमर चार्टर्ड लैबर नामक पुस्तक का विमोचन भी किया जिसमें विभिन्न राज्यों से बालश्रम से मुक्त कराए गए बच्चों की कहानी है।

Their strength brought winds of sweeping change
 Six achievers felicitated for defying overwhelming odds
 Chittaurgarh

धरातलीय स्तर पर समस्या पहचान ही निराकरण
 न्यूज़ सर्विस
 चित्तौड़गढ़, 9 अक्टूबर। राष्ट्रीय विकास परिषद की ओर से आयोजित धरातलीय स्तर पर समस्या पहचान ही निराकरण कार्यक्रम का चित्तौड़गढ़ में आयोजन किया गया।

बाल अधिकार संरक्षण की जानकारी दी
 चित्तौड़गढ़, कन्दा की ओर से एक बाल अधिकार संरक्षण कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया गया।

कन्या भ्रूण हत्या पर फिल्म दिखाई
 चित्तौड़गढ़, 9 अक्टूबर। राष्ट्रीय विकास परिषद की ओर से आयोजित धरातलीय स्तर पर समस्या पहचान ही निराकरण कार्यक्रम का चित्तौड़गढ़ में आयोजन किया गया।

उदयलाल को मिला नया जीवन
 भास्कर न्यूज़, चित्तौड़गढ़
 उदयलाल को मिला नया जीवन

घटियावली में प्रवेशोत्सव कार्यक्रम
 न्यूज़ सर्विस
 चित्तौड़गढ़, 13 अक्टूबर। प्रवेशोत्सव कार्यक्रम का आयोजन किया गया।

Glimpses





ISBN 978-81-8257-205-8

Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD)
Rawala, Village Senth, Chittorgarh. Rajasthan 312001
Ph.: 01472-241472, 235472, Fax: 01472-241472
E-mail-chd@cuts.org, Website: www.cuts-international.org/chd