



Knowledge. Voice. Democracy.
PRIA

research report

July 1997

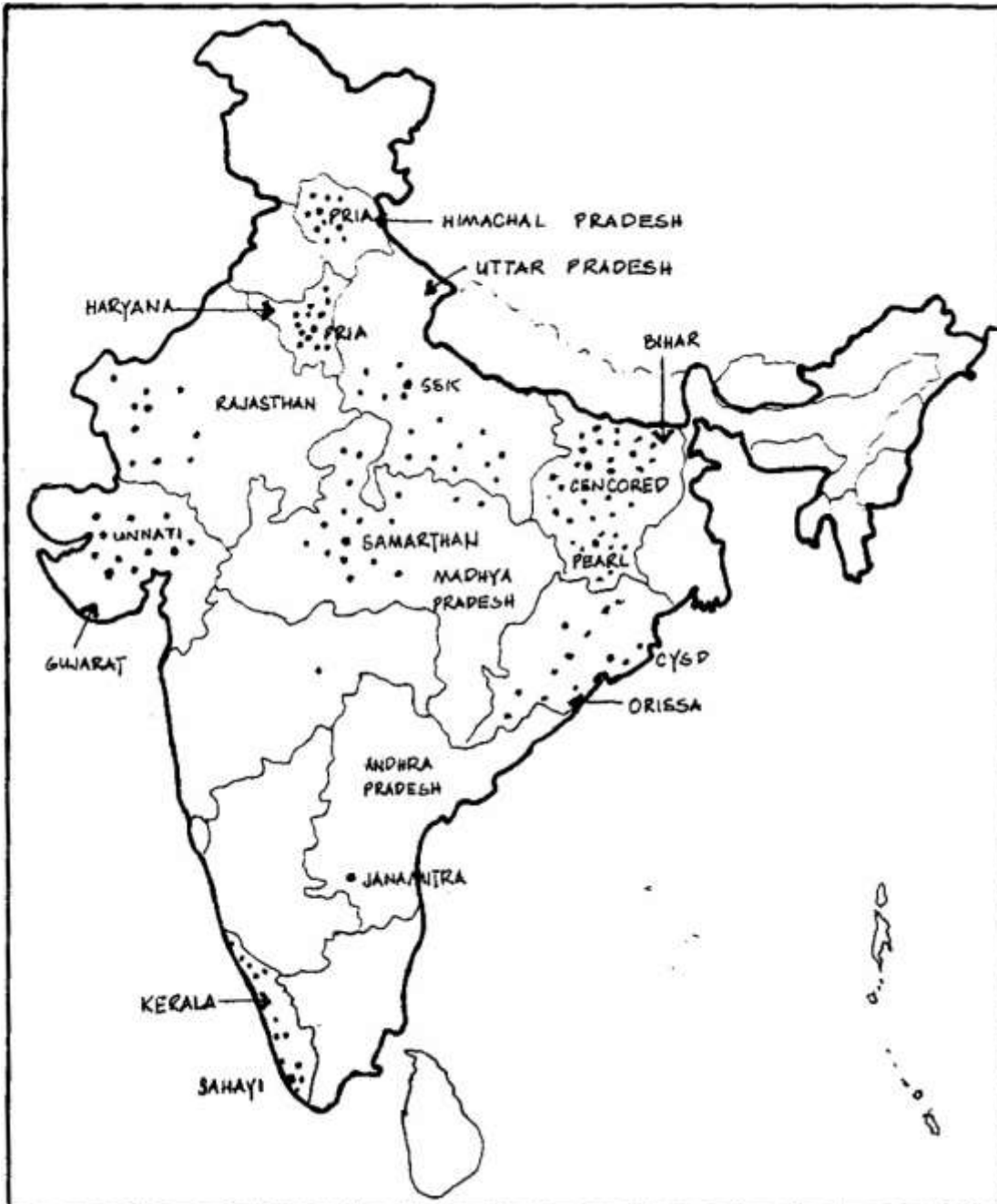


Promotion of Grass-roots Self-Governance: A Multi-Sectoral Strategic Intervention

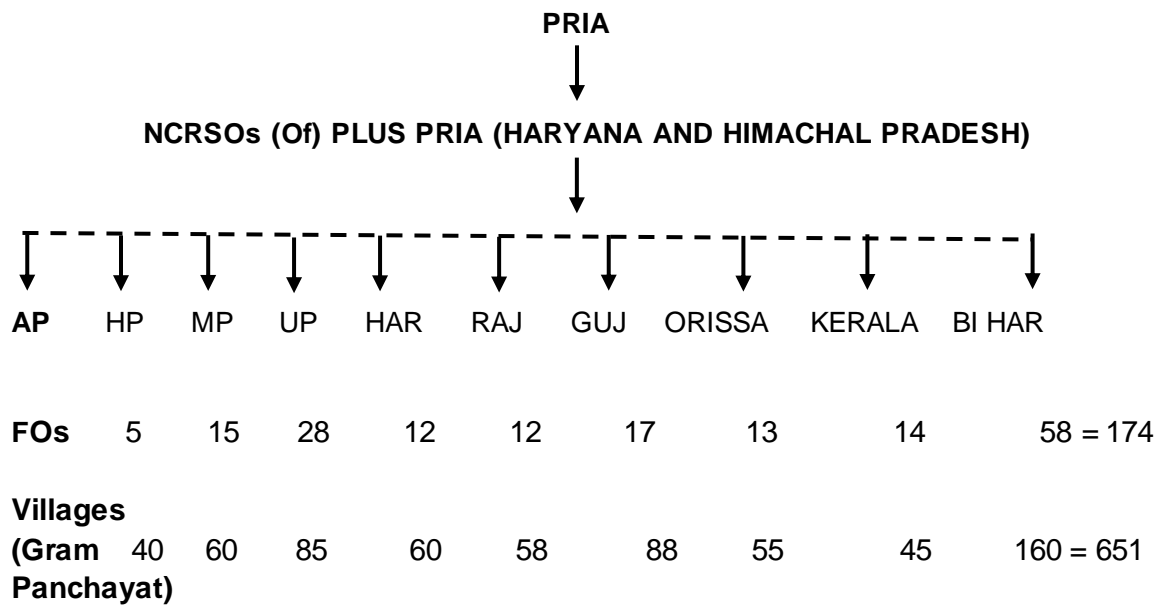
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PROMOTION OF GRASS ROOTS SELF GOVERNANCE
A MULTI-SECTORAL STRATEGIC INTERVENTION
PRIA & NCRSO's AREA OF INTERVENTION



INFRASTRUCTURE



NCRSO - Network of Collaborating Regional Support Organisations
FO's - Field Organisations

SUMMARY REPORT

PRIA and the NCRSOs, in keeping with their philosophy of promoting intervention to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The main objective of the programme is to enable the PRIs to function as institutions of self-governance and not as mere implementors for decision taken elsewhere.

Towards this end, the PRIA/NCRSO team designed a series of inputs such as awareness campaigns, training to strengthen capacities of voluntary organizations and elected representatives of PRIs, research and documentation, preparation and dissemination of educational materials and bottom up planning process. It is hoped that as a result of this intervention, a meaningful dialogue with the government (both Central and State) will be established, thus influencing the policy framework of local self-governance. The unit co-ordinates the NCRSOs activities and also finds ways to develop capacities of their staff in training, research, documentation and micro planning on PRI and provide regular on-site support. During this period over 150 structure trainings, orientation programme organised. Over 70 materials reports (training manual, study reports, newsletter, pamphlets, booklets, posters) prepared and disseminated, bottom up planning process with local people's involvement promoted the community participation and bring government machinery closer towards the issue of participation of elected members and gram sabha members in the local governance.

During this period the seven NCRSOs members worked in seven states i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, coastal and western Orissa, western Rajasthan, Gujarat, Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and southern Kerala. Apart from these, PRIA actively works in eight districts of Haryana and three districts of Himachal Pradesh.

PRI INTERVENTION BY NCRSO'S

SSK

SSK in Uttar Pradesh with Voluntary Agencies

Intervention

- 17 follow-up training with VA's and VA's agent 30 training for elected members
- Preparation of learning material for follow up trainings, manual, news-letters and preparation of visual aid
- Setting up 3 regional resource centers and direct work in six Gram Panchayats, 3 kshetra panchayat and 3 districts in the state
- Bottom up planning exercise with local VA at Kasya Padravana District.

Impact

- Over 700 staff members and 1500 PRI members attended the training and follow up training.
- SSK's material was the only learning materials to reach the various groups. Government as well as the other organizations appreciated these materials and extensively used the same.

- Regional resource center nm in collaboration with local organisation, providing direct support to PRI members especially an intervention related to their roles and responsibilities.
- The experience of bottom up planning process created interest amongst the VA's to initiate similar exercise in other areas.

SAMARTHAN

Focusing on Malwa and Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh involving with 15 VA's and government at the district level

Intervention

- Setting up field office and started activities in 11 GP of Sihore block of Sihore district.
- Samarthan staff facilitated the information between PRI members, consumers and government staff.
- Collaboration with block and district level government.
- Study on women sarpanch in six different places.
- Organised training of trainers, training on "Accounts keeping" how to make the panchayat act operational etc. for Vas and local level government functionaries
- Stakeholders. Analysis and study the problems and periodicity of Gram Panchayat meeting.

Impact

- Cooperation and collaboration established with both government and community along with their requirements. Government officials came forward to solve the micro level problems with joint initiatives and responsibilities.
- Job related training helped the PRI members immediately Micro level study analysis related with government programs. Then government redesigned the policy. e.g. to facilitate.
- The participation of local government staff in the gram panchayat meetings, Gram Panchayat were divided into clusters and date for meetings fixed and all the concerned staff members were asked to participate in the meetings. Responsibilities were given to the respective members and they had to report the process of their work in the meeting.

CYSD

Working with 13 VA's in 12 districts (West Bengal and Central part of Orissa) and government

Intervention

A. Pre-election

1. Awareness campaign with VA, cultural orientation workshop, preparation of various booklets and audio-visual materials for pre-election voter awareness Campaigns

B. Post-election

After election, prepared a booklet focusing on roles, responsibilities of members, various schemes at the Gram Panchayat level, financial part etc.

1. Translation of materials (and simplification) of few common schemes being implemented at the village level with report from Orissa government. Started a micro planning initiative in one panchayat.
2. Strengthening the network of organizations working on PRI issues.

Impact

- CYSD mobilized 13 key VA's for 12 districts to systematically take up these issues. These VA's in turn worked in their local area during the voter's awareness campaign, and support to PRI members. CYSD was the only organization in the state to take up this work.
- Work was appreciated by the state government (planning & coordination department) and invited CYSD to prepare a model Gram Panchayat level micro plan.

UNNATI

Working in eight selected districts of Gujarat with 12 VA's.

Intervention

- Training on budget preparation
- Meeting on how to create an enabling environment for Gram Sabha
- State level training on Panchayati Raj Act and rules, importance of Gram Sabha, budget, planning
- Research to find out the profile of panchayat functionaries. 79 panchayats in six districts of Gujarat have been covered in this regard.
- Periodic thematic bulletins prepared on concept of Self Governance, Jawahar Rozgar Yojna, Government Schemes, Panchayat budget etc.
- Two booklets were prepared in Gujarati on Panchayati Raj Act and womens participation in Panchayati Raj. Poster printed highlighting its needs and significance. A manual prepared on training for panchayat functionaries covering the significance of PRI. Video film prepared.
- A working committee has been formed to critique the act and support amendments.

Impact

- Accepted by the state NGO's as a support institution on PRI initiatives.
- In some areas, where the dalit members are not allowed to lead the panchayat by the upper caste people, after VA's intervention (e.g. Gram Vikas Seva Trust) the dalits sarpanchs have been able to establish their leadership. In their operational area. Social justice committees have been formed.
- Women members have started participating in the meetings.
- A set of amendments were suggested by the working committee submitted to the government.
- Panchayats are directly involved in the watershed activities promoted by some NGO's (like Sarthi).
- Decided to form a district and state level women panchayat members forum where members can share their difficulties and seek alternate solutions.
- In one panchayat women sarpanch has stopped the salary of a primary school teacher for being irregular. Women members are planning to implement government schemes meant for women through the saving groups.
- In some areas for the first time, Gram Sabha meeting was held (e.g. panchayats Sarla and Rohilca panchayats) panchayats have been reviewing their taxation system.
- In some places Gram Sabha were conducted in the night. General impression about the Gram Sabha i.e. 'getting together to eat and make merry' has at least changed.

UNNATI

Unnati is also working in Western part of Rajasthan covering 5 districts and 12 Vas.

Intervention

- Prepare a micro plan for selected panchayats in Jawaja Block of Rajasthan in collaboration with local government staffs
- Organize trainings for PRI members in selected districts of Rajasthan.

Impact

- Planning and implementation process are further strengthened with active involvement of local administration and community.
- Many groups after attending training organised by Unnati, take up active follow up activities, like organising orientation for elected members. women members, provided supports in planning and organising gram Sabha meeting etc.

CENCORED

Working in Central and Northern Bihar

Intervention

- Directly involved in pre-election voter's awareness campaign
- Setting up over 25 village information centers (VIC) at the panchayat and block level and helped the local community to run it. This intonations center, besides spreading awareness on Panchayati raj also prepared 'Shanti Dal' which consists of members of the Gram Sabha, both men and women from the local village who make efforts to spread awareness about the election process, concept of self-governance etc. A cultural team is also associated with these information centers who spread the message of Panchayati raj through folk and mass media. Several trainings and workshops were organised to establish such intonations centers and how they function.
- Organised 'Communication' training workshop for equipping the grass root level organizations in effective communication of messages and ideas in PRIs. Prepared learning material for different target groups including audio cassettes
- Formation of kishori Panchayat to create awareness among them and also their parents especially mothers.
- Set up PRI resource center in 3 ego-cultural zones.
- CENCORED is also working extensively in building groups and networks.

Impact

- Organised over 50 meetings/trainings with VA's for awareness campaign.
- Involved more than 50 VA's directly in this programme. They in turn oriented over 6000 community leaders.
- A team of Resource persons at the block and district level has been built. They are regularly organizing orientation training to the people.

- Awareness material disseminated and this has been well accepted by the target groups. Wall paintings. poster prepared at the local level was found to be effective.
- UNICEF invited CENCORED to prepare materials and organize trainings for the members of
- Nehru Yuvak Kendra to organize themselves towards PRI programme.
- Voluntary organisations have fully utilized resources and personnel in the awareness generation programme in their area.
- A large number of villagers are aware about. PRI, rules of gram Sabha, gram panchayat, gram kacheri, panchayat samiti etc.
- Impact study of pre-election voter awareness campaign findings shows 46% positive responses.
- Major problem is that due to repeated postponement of election, people are disheartened;
- Community in local VA as well as in some situation CENCORED staff also.

PEARL

(Working in Southern Bihar with 13 organisations in eight districts)

Intervention

- Focused on tribal issues of self-governance
- Organised a series of meetings with community to understand the "Community participation in the tribal society
- Completed a field-based study on the local tribals (traditional leaders, youth, women) view points on various prevalent myth about tribal society
- Publish monthly newsletter to promote awareness on this issue.
- Involve in a study on micro planning on people's participation in forest management.
- Prepared booklet on the compilation on various view's on tribal self-rule.

Impact

- Created an awareness about the concept of self-governance in the tribal areas through their study and newsletter
- Community gradually understand what is good for them and what is not. A community level discussion initiated.
- Forest department invited them to prepare micro plan for forest protection and development through peoples participation in selected ranges in Dalma forest division.

SARAYI

(Working in Trivandrum and northern districts.)

Intervention

- Bottom up planning initiative at Sasthamcotta block Intensive support to 14 VA's through training and orientations.
- Research on comparative analysis of emerging structure of Panchayati raj. study on effective functioning of male and female headed panchayats
- Prepared learning materials pamphlet, booklet, bulletin, audio cassette on various themes of Panchayati raj

Impact

- SAHAYI has gained recognition in imparting training to NGO's on issues related to Panchayati raj institutions.
- SAHAYI materials is the only available learning materials on PRI. This is being used by others for awareness generation.

PRIA's work in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh

From early 1995, PRIA was directly working in some areas of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. In this year our direct work in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh further strengthened.

At the state training of Trainers (TOT) Programme in February 1996 at Raj Following issues emerged

Gram Panchayat: regular interaction and training's with elected representations to impart information about the act, enhance leadership skills, and equip women members to cope with their new roles effectively.

Gram Sabha: mobilisation Gram Sabha members and motivating them to play an active role in the development of their area.

Sensitization: sensitizing family members, the community as well as the government to provide a supportive and conducive environment to the newly elected representatives.

Networking and Advocacy: Creating a pressure group and carrying out research and documentation for the purpose of advocacy both at the policy level and state, district, block government machinery. Also working towards strengthening the relationship between the panchayats and government at all levels.

The participants wanted PRIA to assist in the planning and implementation of all activities and provide the required educational support for distribution. They also requested us to start a news magazine on PRI for Haryana and continue to facilitate and strengthen this network of VA's in Haryana.

PRIA's Direct Intervention on PRI

HARYANA

(Covering 8 district and 12 VA's)

Intervention

Gram Sabha

- During visits and meetings PRIA decided to work for Gram Sabha meetings and accordingly encouraged some VA's to facilitate such meetings in their areas of work.
- Total six three-day trainings were organised to trainings a few village level meetings were also organised. These meetings were organised in three different places in Rohtak and Ambala Faridabad, Kamal, Kurushkhetra etc. districts.

- During October 14th - 16th, 1996 PRIA organised a two day meet of voluntary organisations in Haryana at PRIA. The main objectives of this meet were: Sharing experiences of one-year work on PRI, evolving a common goal/perspective, Determining future strategies

Gram Sabha Meetings

- As decided during our VA meet, many of the VA's facilitated the process of perpetrating GP and GS members to hold a Gram Sabha meeting. The Haryana team assisted the concerned VA's and panchayats in organizing these meetings. Our team also attended all these Gram Sabha meetings. the details of which are given at the back.
- The following materials were prepared during this period:

(1) 'Panchayati Raj Par Chitra Sangreh': This is a book in Hindi with a lot of illustrations and some written matter giving details of the Haryana act. (2) 'Aap Aur Hwn': This is a newsmagazine onPRI for Ha.raryana and gives information of the various activities, perceptions changes etc. in the act as being implemented in Haryana and other states. (3) 'Aap ki Sabha Gram Sabha': This is a poster OD gram sabha

Research Studies

- The team completed 3 case studies. These are: (1) effective functioning of women headed panchayats and (2) effective functioning of male headed panchayats and (3) effectiveness of Panchayat Secretaries. All these studies covered samples from Ambala., Rohtak, Faridabad districts. Study findings are being utilized in the training programmes, and discussion with elected members as well as government officials. Besides this periodically data was collected in a structured format to understand the impact of our specific initiatives.

People Centred bottom-up planning exercise at Jhajher Tehsil, Rohtak district

- During July 26-27 A two-day workshop was organised at Khetavas Gram Panchayat with VA, Asha Sadan. The purpose of this meeting was to explore the possibility of our long-term direct involvement for micro-planning exercise. Panchayat Members from seven wards of Khetavas.

Impact

- PRIA along with the VA's helped the panchayats to plan their agenda as well as participated in the meetings. In both the meetings women's participation was very large and in one we made the woman panch sit on the chair with the other 20% of the Gram Sabha members. One meeting was videotaped one to be used as training material Also prepared an observatory case study of the Gram Sabha meetings.
- The meet was attended by fifteen participants from 10 organisations in Haryana. The outcome was that the Network of VA's was strengthened, common perspective developed, clarity on PRI and future plans made.
- It was observed that both the Sarpanchs and secretaries were very nervous as they had never conducted a Gram Sabha before. In many of the meetings the GS members were very vocal (men & women) and raised a lot of questions. It has also noticed that the Sarpanchs were not prepared to respond to the accusations, queries etc. and therefore, there is a need to train them. Similarly, the GS members need to be prepared to ask relevant questions and suggest solutions. Women have to be

encouraged to not only be present but also participate actively by asking questions and giving suggestions. On the whole it was a very good experience for our team.

- These materials along with materials prepared earlier are well accepted by VA's. Government training institutes also utilized these materials in this training. The research findings are discussed and analysed in our training. Positive findings we should with government functions and negative also analysed with them.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

(Covering 3 districts and 5 VA's)

Intervention

Micro Planning

- From May '1996, PRIA team systematically facilitated and was actively involved in bottom-up participatory planning process in Kehar panchayat. Local panchayat, voluntary organisation, Rural Technology and Development Centre (RTDC), village youth, women and other interested people are involved village youths, women and other interested people are involved in the process. This team is involved in working towards a collective understanding of the local problems, available resources, its present use and plan based on requirements. During this process a series of dialogue and interventions were held with Gram Sabha members, elected members, various associations and groups like Mahila Mandals, Nehru Yuvak Mandals and concerned government staff.

Comparative case studies between male and female headed panchayats:

- The purpose of this case study is to see how effectively the male and the female headed panchayats are functioning exactly one year after parts of Kangra, Mandi and Chamba districts were covered for this study. The study has been prepared.

Case studies on panchayat secretaries:

- Data and information have collected from panchayat secretaries in Mandi and Kangra district. Some more secretaries are to be interviewed from these 2 districts. A total of 50 samples is to be collected.

Preparation of Materials

- A Hindi poster on bottom-up planning process has been prepared and disseminated. A note on bottom-up planning process has been prepared and is to be printed along with our experiences in Kehar Panchayat. A simplified version of the state act is also being prepared. The data and information being analysed.

Impact

- With community, panchayats problems were analysed through meetings, then development priorities were also identified by the community and its possible solutions were discussed. Based on these an outline of the plan was prepared and discussed with the district and block officials. Efforts are on for its phased implementation and repeating the same initiative in others areas of the district and the state in collaboration with panchayat and government. Orientation of elected members and local government staff towards this is necessary.

- This case study finding shared with community and incorporated in our training meetings with panchayat members.
- After analysis of panchayat secretaries study report, we will dialogue with concerned department and make them more supportive to gram panchayats.
- Learning materials are being used in training and disseminated away all the zilla parishad, District Collectors offices and others VA's in the state. There are only materials available. Many of them asked for more copies.

Follow up training of GP members

During April 1996 PRIA staff visited the VA's to plan the trainings of PRI members in all the areas.

As a follow-up, a series of meetings with local villages and VA were held. We decided to take up six GP for bottom-up planning exercise in this tehsil. One staff member of PRIA along with local VA members are staying in Chuchukwas and has established close link with the villages. A detailed plan for an intervention in June 1997 to March 1998 is also prepared. Basically, our role will be to provide information, knowledge and skills to the various sections of the community to sit together, discuss and analyze their problem and take initiatives to solve them.

PRIA has set up a field office at Chuchukwas and two staff members are staying there most of the time to follow up the process.

Support to Vas

Regular support extended to V A's who attended STOT programme in February 1996. Follow-up trainings are being organised in Kangra district.

Other Involvement with Government:

- 1) Team members were invited by Haryana Institute of Rural Development (HIRD) to make presentation as Resource person for a training of BDO's DRDA and Bank officials. State Community Development Training Centre, Nilokheri invited form the training of Panchayat Extension officers. State Institute of Rural Development made PRIA a member of their academic committee.
- 2) Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) awareness generation programme has made PRIA as a nodal agency for their AGP program for women. We have suggested the names of organisations in Haryana and shall be responsible for their training orientation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- 3) PRIA is also in touch with Mewat Development Agency (MDA) and participated in their training programme as Resource Person. Conducted a training programme for their staff and attended comments.

Are we making a difference?

- State governments recognized the NCRSO members as a resource support organization in the state and bring the self-governance issue in the forefront.
- PRIA with its joint initiative established a direct network of over 500 V A's who are working on Panchayati Raj issue in 10 states. They in tum direct over 20,000 elected members and another 30,000 through dissemination in touch with of educational material.
- Prepared a cadre of people who act as facilitators to spread the concept of self-governance and its operationalization at the micro level.

- Raised the 'issue of women' participation - through research, training and information dissemination. In many places, VA's other members of the community and government staff are giving importance to women's participation and involvement.
- Focused in 'Gram Sabha'. Due to focused intervention, gram Sabha is being organised in many gram panchayats.

RESEARCH IN THE JOINT PRI PROGRAMME UNDERTAKEN BY PRIA AND NCRSOs

Research in the joint PRI programme primarily functions as a scientific support to our initiatives of strengthening grass roots democracy. Research lends validity to our systematic analysis and conclusions derived as a consequence of our learning's in the field.

The overall objective of this joint intervention undertaken by the NCRSOs and PRIA is to:

1. Make PRI bodies units of local self-governance.
2. Promote leadership of women and marginalized sections.
3. Enable panchayats to have control over their natural resources.

In order to fulfil these three objectives PRIA and NCRSOs adopted a strategy which was centered around twin objectives of capacity building of voluntary agency members (VA) and Panchayati Raj institutions elected representatives (PRI). The capacity building was done through training interventions, educational material preparation and dissemination and Microplanning (Action Research).

The research component of this programme aims to:

- Assess the various interventions going on in the field through the PRI/ VA formats development for the purpose (on- going monitoring)
- study the emerging issues which are of relevance to the PRIs case studies of women headed panchayats, panchayat secretaries, gram Sabha study etc.
- to study the impact of our interventions by doing short comparative studies in areas of intervention and non-intervention.

Research related work done till date:

- 1) A research and documentation workshop were organised in October '95, to orient the NCRSOs and PRIA team to conventional research methods and its relevance in research activities of the PRI programme. This workshop was organised by PRIA and was attended by 17 participants. In this workshop some formats for data collection and quarterly reporting of activities by RSOs were development. The details of this workshop have been documented and the report disseminated to the RSOs
- 2) Software for VA / PRI data based have been developed
- 3) Case studies of women/ male headed panchayats have been initiated and taken up by the RSOs.
- 4) A research and documentation workshop were organised from 12th - 14th November '96 at PRIA which was attended by 17 participants from PRIA and SCRSOs. The workshop aimed to analyze the past research activity of the RSOs and to develop and finalize detail study framework which the RSOs will undertake jointly. The details of the workshop have been documented and the report disseminated to the RSOs.

- 5) As a follow-up to the above workshop the PRI/ VA formats were modified and detailed out and sent to the RSOs, the code sheets of these modified formats have also been made.
- 6) Microplanning monitoring formats have also been developed.

Future Plans:

- VA/ PRI (phase I) data from the eight RSOs will be sent to PRIA by March' 97 which will be analysed using the SPSS software and the report will be made by May 97 provided we get all the data on time.
- In order to lend support and facilitate timely collection and sending of the above data visits to all RSOs will be undertaken.
- Consolidation of study on women\ male headed panchayats will be done by last week of Feb'97.
- VA/ PRI formats (phase II) will be sent to us by June' 97 It's analysis and report will be ready by August' 97.
- Some more case studies e.g. on panchayat secretaries, gram Sabha will be undertaken by the RSOs. The details of these studies have been worked out in the Nov.' 96 workshops.
- PRIA with its joint initiative established a direct network of over 500 VA's who are working on Panchayati Raj issue in 10 states. They in tum direct over 20,000 elected members and another 30,000 through dissemination in touch with of educational material.
- Prepared a cadre of people who act as facilitators to spread the concept of self-governance and its operationalization at the micro level.
- Raised the 'issue of women' participation through research, training and information dissemination. In many places, VA's other members of the community and government staff are giving importance to women's participation and involvement.
- Focused in 'Gram Sabha'. Due to focused intervention, gram Sabha is being organised in many gram panchayats.

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 PRIA (1997): Promotion of Grass-Roots Self Governance- A Multi Sectoral Strategic Intervention



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