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**PRIA**

December, 1998

## **Pilot Project of Grassroots Citizen participation in Local Self-governance in Ten States**

## Direct Strengthening of PRIs

### 2.0 Introduction

The concept of 'Direct Strengthening' of PRJs is intrinsically associated with the issue of 'power to the grassroots' or people's access to decision making and power. The capacity building of local level bodies of governance like Gram Panchayat (GP) and Gram Sabha (GS), undertaken by PRIA and its collaborating NCRSOs is an effort towards this direction.

PRIA envisaged PRIs to be effective bodies of participatory self-governance and not merely executors of centrally determined development schemes. Towards this end, PRIA and the NCRSOs identified some core areas to focus upon which will help in reinforcing the PRIs. These areas are micro planning, empowering and capacity building, the new leadership of women and weaker sections, identifying and asserting people's claim over locally available resources and enhancing people's participation through information dissemination and awareness building.

Under this programme, each partner work with a select number of G.Ps focusing on atleast one block in a district. The block is turned into a field lab and becomes the basis of experimentation, innovation, learning and dissemination of new ideas on strengthening PRIs. The idea is to move gradually from working at the G.S. and G.P. levels to establishing linkages with P.S. and Z.P. at the blocks and districts respectively. Besides, as pan of the micro planning exercise, each partner (RSOs) is converting itself into a State Resource Centre on PRIs to disseminate informations and build awareness on the issue among the people.

The following sections detail out the activities undertaken by PRIA and each of the NCRSOs in the area of 'Direct Strengthening', across the nine states of India.

### 2.1 SAMARTHAN ( Madhya Pradesh)

SAMARTHAN has been focusing on strengthening collaborations with various actors of civil society who can play major role in strengthening local self-governance in the state. Currently, SAMARTHAN is trying to involve these actors in the process of strengthening PRI institutions.

2.1.1 During the period (April-September | 998) the activities focused on providing intensive support to other civil society organisations working at the grass root level.

To collaborate and build common strategy with the new identified partners, Training of trainers (TOT) was organised for the organisations. A short term plan was developed with their help and new Panchayats were selected for intervention. As a follow up measure Panchayat level trainings were conducted by these trained organisations.

As far as direct intervention is concerned a major focus was also on the involvement of the youths in the developmental activities. The local youth were involved in mobilising Gram Sabha members to participate with the Panchayat in different developmental activities.

**2.1.2 Training Programme:** In all, 5 workshops were organised during the period on various aspects of PRIs and PRI associated activities.

**2.1.3 Micro Level Planning:** The micro planning interventions emphasised on developing Key Resource Persons from various civil society actors and involving them in mobilising the Panchayat representatives and Gram Sabha members to plan their activities based on the principles of micro planning.

Intensive support was provided to 15 Panchayats, focusing on enhancing the participation of communities in Gram Sabha meetings of Panchayats and proper functioning of the statutory committees. Gram Sabhas were also organised to discuss and analyse PRI issues at length.

In Rajukhedi and Badnagar panchayats, gram sudhar samities were formed, Each samiti comprised of 10 concerned Gram Sabha members of the village. The body discussed on issues at the ward level with the community and placed these issues at Panchayat meetings. It was planned that the samiti will also help statutory committees in implementing decisions.

Besides, regular follow up meetings with the samiti were organised. The samiti met Gram Sabha to prioritise certain issues like the repairing of the school building. The people along with the samiti planned to discuss the issue in Panchayat where they will identify local resources and negotiate with line departments for the repair job. It was also planned that if there is a shortfall in the budget, the community will contribute.

In other Panchayats, mobilisation of Gram Sabha to participate in Panchayat activities is in progress where the selected key resource persons and the youth are involved to take up the responsibility of collecting informations and providing the same to the Gram Sabha.

In the process of mobilising Gram Sabha, it was found essential that the informations relevant to the Panchayat should reach the Gram Sabha members. Again, it was felt that the community should also be kept informed. It was observed that usually, the Panchayat related informations were provided by the Panchayat representatives, Panchayat secretary or the officials and these were invariably manipulated or suppressed to serve their vested interest. Thus, during the discussions with the Gram Sabha and the youth groups the need for an information centre emerged.

Till date, suchana kendras (Information Centres) have been established in 8 different villages of Sehore district, namely, Jamonia, Raipura, Rajukhedi, Role, Badnagar, Bilkisganj, Bijan and Baiyan, The villagers selected local persons to run the kendras. Materials related to the PRIs and developmental schemes, PRI related acts, literacy materials, Newspapers, carrier guidance magazines have been kept at the centre.

During the discussion sessions the villagers repeatedly pointed out the need for being properly informed. Later, the Panchayat representatives and the Gram Sabha members were mobilised and motivated about the necessity of an information centre. The villagers nominated some young men and women to coordinate the information dissemination process at the Gram Sabha level.

#### **2.1.4 Involvement of the youth in social development activities of the village:**

Subsequently, a creative communication workshop meeting was organised with the youths. Plans were prepared to conduct street plays, focus group discussions in the 10 Panchayats where intensive support programme was on. Plays were written on the issues of Panchayat in general and participation of women in decision making process and Panchayats in particular. These plays were staged at three different Panchayats in the month of September. Several meetings followed with the youths where the importance of information dissemination was reiterated.

The major issue taken up concerning the involvement of youth groups was greater participation of young girls in different activities. Some awareness programmes related to the health and reproductive health of adolescent girls were planned so that they can be involved in different community activities more easily.

**2.1.5 Formation of women representatives network in Sehore:** To initiate the process of women's network, intensive visits to the Panchayats were made. Focus group discussions were conducted among the women gram Sabha members on the problems they face in the day to day Panchayat activities.

**2.1.6 Visits to the Partner NGOs to follow up micro planning initiatives:** Field visits to the Panchayats (of Parhit, Brass and Prayatna) were made in the Bundelkhand region. Discussions with the community and the staff of NGOs have been made. Different meetings at ward level were organised and discussions with different community were conducted to identify problems at their levels. In the first round of meetings with the community problems were identified and prioritised. The community also planned with the organisations the dates for the further meetings.

## 2.2 PRIA (Haryana)

2.2.1 In Haryana, PRIA's efforts towards direct strengthening of Panchayats were earned out in collaboration with some select voluntary organisations (see Annexure 3), working in the state who continue to receive educational support from PRIA for building their capacities to undertake similar initiatives in their own work areas.

The programmes undertaken as part of direct strengthening were

1. microplanning
2. village information centre
3. Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat functioning in one block

**2.2.2. Microplanning:** Based on its experiences of carrying out participatory bottom-up planning in two Panchayats, Dhana and Khetavas in district Jhajjar, PRIA undertook a similar initiative in District Mahendergarh. Inspired by the process, Jan Sewa Kendra, a voluntary organisation based in Mahendergarh District took the responsibility of replicating it in their work area.

This was viewed as a good opportunity for both replication of the earlier participatory model as well as to build the capacities of the local organisation undertaking this process in collaboration with PRIA.

As part of the process, training was organised by Jan Sewa Kendra and PRIA for elected representatives and other interested Gram Sabha members of Baliacha village to acquaint the participants with the 73rd amendment and its features, impart knowledge on the nature and importance of Panchayat planning and generate awareness about the role of Gram Sabha.

Subsequently, a Panchayat meeting was called by the VA. The participants who consisted of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat members were shown a film on PRI called 'Sanshodhan' (followed by) a discussion regarding the role and responsibility of different stakeholders involved in planning process, the objectives of participatory planning, importance of small group discussion and the usefulness of participatory meetings.

Some of the insights and ideas that emerged out of the discussion were

- One-to-one discussions between villagers and Panchayat Representatives can orient the former about the planning process and enhance their general participation.
- Trainings and orientations of small groups within the wards can evoke interest and ensure participation of all sections of the community.

The ward wise meetings were also organised by respective Panch members under the guidance of the VA. Highlighting the importance of people's participation in identifying issues of concern and taking the necessary responsibilities and decisions for the same, the VA representative and Panchayat member asked people for their suggestions and ideas.

The number of people who volunteered to assist was seen as an indication of peoples involvement and interest in the process.

Based on the needs expressed by the volunteer group formed at the ward level, an orientation programme was held at the Panchayat premises. The volunteers were explained in detail the overall strategy of the Participatory Bottom up Planning process and their role in making this effective. Discussions revolved around issues of community participation, need for small group discussions in the existing scenario of conflict and indifference between different groups, issues of economic development and social justice. The volunteers were found to give full commitment to their active participation in the initiative.

During the small group discussions and meetings it was revealed that people were unclear about their exact ward boundaries in the Panchayat area. As a result they were unable to give suggestions like where the water taps can be installed etc. This led to the organisation of pictorial exercises in each ward whereby the different groups living in those wards could come together and map out a picture of their ward along with the existing resources available in the same. Pictorial Exercises were carried out in two wards ( viz, Ward No. 1 and Ward No.2).

Based on the issues/problems identified by the villagers during earlier meeting, the sector specific plan was prepared in the presence of Panchayat members, I.V.G. members, VAs representatives and PRIA's representatives at the Jan Sewa Kendra premises. Besides, in order to share the sector specific plans with the entire village and elicit discussions on it, a Gram Sabha meeting was called by the Panchayat. While the VA and Panchayat representatives went about organising the meeting, the Volunteer group played an equally important role by meeting individual Gram Sabha members and motivating them to participate in the meeting. PRIA team members helped to facilitate the process.

The implementation process is in progress with the committee members taking direct responsibility for it. They are negotiating with the respective departments based on the plans formulated. Both Jan Sewa Kendra (the local V.O.) and PRIA continue to play a supportive role in this phase of implementation.

The entire process helped to bring the different sections of the community together and make decisions collectively for the development of the Panchayat. An increased involvement of the marginalised groups was observed as the process moved forward providing an opportunity for their issues and concerns to appear in the emerging plan.

People's knowledge about their own Panchayat and wards was enhanced enabling them to identify the various issues and find solutions with the available resources.

The process provided an opportunity for many people to actively take up responsibilities and assume leadership roles.

The participatory bottom-up planning process helped build knowledge, skills, role clarity and solidarity amongst the Panchayat representatives who played a key role in taking the process forward.

The process helped to enhance the capacities of the local VA and its members and build better relations between them and the community

Finally, it provided valuable insights to the PRIA team involved in the process about the existing dynamics of a Panchayat. New methods and strategies of community participation, leadership development and conflict resolution were learnt through this experience.

However, a few limitations were present in the process. For instance, while the facilitators had a good understanding of participatory methods they lacked the necessary budgeting and technical skills required for planning. However, efforts arc on to seek external assistance as well as lo enhance PRIA 's own skill and knowledge on the subject.

Government functionaries were conspicuously absent in the whole process. Involvement of government functionaries right from the beginning would have ensured greater authenticity of the process as well as help to bridge the existing gap between the people and the government.

Financial devolution to the Panchayati Raj institutions in Haryana is still a distant dream. Lack of knowledge about the funds available to Panchayats through different schemes and secondly effective ways to utilise their own Panchayat funds makes Panchayats totally dependent on the government machinery. Although the participatory bottom-up planning process enabled the Panchayats to identify their own resources and match it with the need of the area, dependency on the government for implementation of the plan creates a lot of frustration and disillusionment

**2.2.3 Village Information Centre:** After having decided through workshops and meetings, efforts were made by the community, Panchayat, and PRIA to set up the VIC. A one day meeting was organised at the centre to inform people of this and to seek their involvement in developing this information centre. The main activities of the VIC was envisaged as-

1. Collection and dissemination of information on government and non-government development schemes
2. Organisation of workshops and trainings for the villagers on need based issues
3. Call meetings and conduct large group discussions among the villagers on issues related to their Panchayat

#### **2.2.4 Direct Strengthening of Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas in District Rewari, Haryana**

PRIA begun its interventions in Nahar block of Rewari district in collaboration with a local Voluntary Organisation (VO) MRYDO.

MRYDO with PRIA's support initiated the process by organising several workshops both at the PRIA field office as well as in some villages in Nahar block. These one day sessions were attended by Mahila Manda! women, members of the youth clubs, Sarpanches, ranches as well as other Gram Sabha members. The participants were motivated to get actively involved and make efforts towards strengthening the process through their participation. Several participants volunteered to carry out the work in their own villages.

**2.2.5 Building capacities:** Based on the increasing demand for information and capacity building, a one day workshop was organised by PRIA at its field office, Kosli. Along with the Panchayat members, Mahila Mandal members, youth groups active Gram Sabha members also participated. After a full day of discussion on the roles and responsibilities of both the Panchayat and Gram Sabha for the development of the area, it was decided that there would be one committee at the block level to provide support, direction and supervision of the work being carried out by the participants for the development of their Panchayats

**Self-governance (peoples committees):** The Panchayats decided to constitute small committees in each village comprising of the Sarpanch, Panchayat members, members of the Mahila Mandals and youth groups. The purpose was two fold - to give direct responsibility to a set of individuals and to ensure involvement and representation of different stakeholders in the process. It was decided that these committees will seek guidance and support from the block level committee.

## 2.3 PRIA (Himachal Pradesh)

### 2.3.1 Identification of "field lab" in Rait Block

A few Panchayats around PRIA 's field office in Rait block were identified as 'field labs', where intensive activities were undertaken. These Panchayats are namely, Garoh, Chari, Kaliyara, Dadhamb, Lanjhni, Ansui and Bandi. Meetings were organised with the CBOs and Panchayat leaders. Besides, PRIA's field staff regularly attended the Gram Panchayat meetings.

### 2.3.2 Regular visits and monitoring of Panchayat Resource Centres

Regular visits were made to the three Panchayat Resource Centres at Ambadi, Meherna and Tatwani respectively to see to their functioning and closely monitor the progress made.

**2.3.3 District level dialogue:** A one day district level dialogue was organised on 25th August, 1998 at the Zila Parishad Hall, Mandi. The purpose of this meeting was to share the findings of the two research studies completed by PRIA on Panchayat Finance and Women in Panchayats, in Mandi and Kangra districts. The participants were mainly district level officials, Zila Parishad members, Chairperson of Panchayat Samiti and a few Gram Panchayat Pradhans. Discussion revolved around the research findings. Some women members also shared their experience as elected representatives vis-a-vis the male PRI members, government officials and the community.

A few days after the district level workshop, Mr. D.D. Thakur, Chairperson, Zila Parishad, Mandi called a press conference in which he shared the research findings.

**2.3.4 Block level dialogues:** Similarly, block level dialogues were organised during the months of July and September to share the findings of the research studies in the blocks of Sadar, Sundernagar and Rait. Another major objective of the meeting was to initiate a dialogue between the elected representatives and government officials at the block level on scarcity of Panchayat funds and present method of fund allocation.

**2.3.5 Participatory planning:** A member of the PRI-HP team presented the paper on "process of participatory Panchayat level planning in a national seminar organised in Delhi on 15th May on "Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions in India: Participatory planning towards empowerment of PRI's".

**2.3.6 Training of Pradhans and Up-Pradhans:** The PRI-HP team was invited as resource persons in the training programme of Pradhans and Up-Pradhans, organised by the Government of Himachal Pradesh. Initially this training was undertaken in two districts - Mandi and Hamirpur. Since, PRIA has been working in Mandi district for the past 3 years, it was asked to take a few sessions in all the IO blocks of Mandi district. The sessions were on various aspects of the new Panchayati Raj system including Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha, issues concerning social and gender justice, role of women representatives etc.

**2.3.7 Preparation of educational materials:** Two educational materials were prepared during this period by PRIA along with SIDT, Shimla, These were:

- Simplified version of Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act
- Poster cum calendar on the structure of Panchayati Raj system in HP

## 2.4 PEARL (Bihar)

PEARL is active in tribal areas of South Bihar specially in schedules V areas.

**2.4.1 Orientation camps/meetings:** The camps (see Annexure 4) were organised with the following objectives in view.

- To disseminate information on Bhuria Committee report and Extended Panchayat Act (1996) in Scheduled Areas
- To know programmes of the Bharat Jan Andolan
- To discuss about the role of women in decision making and participation of other backward communities
- To examine the notification of state Government departments of mines and minerals

#### **2.4.2 Workshops attended by staff**

Overall, the staff attended 8 workshops on varied topics ranging from Tribal Self rule (Ghatshila) to media and NGO relationship (New Delhi). For details see Annexure 5. These workshops enormously helped the participants to update their knowledge base and emerge more confident.

### **2.5 CENCORED (Bihar)**

**2.5.1 Panchayat Bachao Abhiyan:** It was initiated during June-August 1998 in which the following activities were undertaken.

- Protest day was observed in a rally before Patna High Court and a memorandum was submitted to the Chief Justice to be passed on to the Chief Justice of Supreme Court, appealing for early disposal of pending cases related to Panchayat election in Bihar.
- A meeting of Voluntary Organisations was organised at state level to discuss on the future of the agitation programme. It was resolved to adopt a policy of agitation right from village and Panchayat levels and make the villagers aware about the need for an early Panchayat election.
- Voluntary Organisations also organised numerous meetings, rallies and protests in their respective areas and successfully observed "Panchayat Bachao Pakhawara" (Save Panchayat Fortnight).
- Signature campaign was organised at the village level for the same cause.
- A rally was organised in Patna on 14th August 1998. Different slogans in favour of state Panchayat election were raised.
- Another rally was organised at Rajghat, New Delhi which was attended by B.M.Tarkunde, Rajni Kothari, George Mathew, along with representatives from various Voluntary Organisations of Bihar,
- A meeting of MIND partners and Regional Resource Centres was held in which progress of various activities was reviewed, the emerging needs were discussed and future action plan was prepared. Mind partners have also been making concerted efforts at Panchayat level to collect data for information centres.

#### **2.5.2 Efforts undertaken by the Voluntary Organisations of CENCORED Network:**

- Different organisation like UJALA (West Champaran), JAGRIT YUVA SANGAM (Nawada) and SAMTA (Khagaria), adopted various activities like empowerment of women programme (Param Shakti) and other activities in the last three months.
- UJALA succeeded in involving government officials at the district level in activities of Param Shakti, Kishori Panchayat and Mahila Samakhya.



- SAMTA, Khagaria, organised meeting of Voluntary Organisations of three districts=Saharsa, Madhepura and Khagaria and resolved to organise women for Param Shakti activities, and improve the collaboration among the Voluntary Organisations of Koshi region. It also established rapport with government officials for better co-operation in future.

### 2.5.3 Output:

- Intensive advocacy efforts at the Patna High Court and the Supreme Court is making visible impact both in the field and intellectual fora. The efforts received moral and legal support even at the Supreme Court level.

- Rallies at panchayat, district, state and national levels have succeeded in creating a conducive environment for the cause of Panchayat election in Bihar.

- Involving "Panchayati Raj Sarniti" both at the state and national levels proved to be a good strategy as the documents provided by the state level organisation was used as a solid base for building the legal case.

**2.5.4 Constraints:** During the period, most of CENCORED's PRI partners, especially in the north Bihar, faced one of the worst floods in recent times. They ran the PRI activities at a low key to pool in their resources to help the flood victims.

## 2.6 SSK (Uttar Pradesh)

**2.6.1 Direct Strengthening:** In Rae Bareilly district, SSK's partner VA, Lok Mitra prepared the ground in three Panchayats of Ahal, Kachhnawa and Garhwa in Deeb Development Block of the district so that the process of microplanning can be initiated.

Efforts were on to regularise Gram Sabha (GS) and Gram Panchayat (GP) meetings. to ensure that GS and GP meetings were actually held to transact their business as envisaged in the UP Panchayat Raj Act. Through informal talks, door to door visits, group discussions among the GS and GP members they were motivated to participate in the meetings.

The endeavour lead to regular organisation of the GS and GP meetings in which women, scheduled castes and backward classes and local actors like Mahila Mandals, Nehru Yuva Kendra, Yuva Mangal Dal and other functional groups in the villages participated to discuss their problems and come up with probable solutions.

Trainings for GP members was organised with the objectives of making them aware of the PR Act, rules, regulations, government orders and the need to prepare microplan of the Panchayat.

The trainings made the GP members aware of the PR Act, rules, regulations. They are also expected to spread the learnings from the training programme among the GS members.

Volunteers were identified and trained to make them active members of GS, GP, Yuvak Mangal Dal and Mahila Mangal Dal so that they can help in GP related work in general and microplanning activity in particular.

**2.6.2 Preparation of Educational Material:** SSK simplified the PR Act and prepared two booklets: Hamari Panchayat Vyavascha and Panchayati Raj Apka Apna Raj. The booklets were extensively used in training programmes. There is a plan to bring out a Sandarbh Pustika (Reference Booklet) in two parts; the first dealing with the provisions of the PR Act and the second with the Rules, Regulations, Notifications, Govt. orders issued from time to time after the enactment of the Act.

**2.6.3 Regional Bulletins:** The PRCs published their regional quarterly bulletins.

**2.6.4 Exposure Visits of VA Members:** Experience sharing and exposure are some of the most important things in the work related to Panchayats. To meet this objective, three exposure visits for members was planned for 1999.

### **2.6.5 Kishan Gosthi:**

This was organised in collaboration with Gram Panchayats to make the villagers/Gram Sabha members aware about appropriate agricultural practices and new cultivation methods.

During visit and informal meetings with the community members, information on appropriate agriculture (i.e., how to improve their crop, mixed cropping etc.) was imparted. As the community expressed their need for more information on agricultural practices, a 'Kisan Gosthi' was organised on August 19, 1998 in which 10 female and 35 male members participated. The resource person were from Krishi Vigyan Kendra.

#### **Output:**

- Villagers became aware about appropriate agriculture, mixed cropping, cultivation, etc.
- They wanted more programmes on the subject.
- Other villagers showed keen interest to participate.

## **2.7 UNNATI (Gujarat)**

2.7.1 The major developments with regard to PRI were:

- On July 1, 1998 the Gujarat Panchayati Raj Act was amended as per the provisions laid down by the Parliament to the Schedule areas. This will be applicable to 4964 tribal villages.
- Five Gram Panchayats (Shijal, Dharaji, Devadthal, Zamp and Rasam) were taken up for direct strengthening activities. The Panchayats were asked to meet the DRDA to get access to a housing scheme named Sardar Patel Avas Yojana. In all the five Panchayats Social Justice Committee have been received. Once the Committee knew about their rights and responsibilities, they went to meet the Taluka Social Justice Committee Chairperson. Every month the Committee members are holding meeting.

In Poshina Tribal Cluster in Khedbrahma Taluka of Sabarkanta District, many rounds of meeting were held with villagers informing them about the amendment of the Panchayat Act which gives rights to Gram Sabha on management of natural resources. During May, a meeting was held with the traditional leaders (Mukhis) to inform them about the advantage of the new amendment and how they can involve in local democratic process. followed by this, a rally was organised during May 11-15, 1998, covering 36 villages of the region to inform about the new amendment.

### **2. 7.2 Educational Support:**

- Presented a paper in Panchayati Raj workshop organised by Gujarat Vidyapeet (April 30--May 1, 1998)
- Joined in a discussion conducted by Bhal Nalkantha Prayogik Sangh on April 18, 1998
- Participated in meeting on tribal governance organised by Centre for Social Justice at Vyara in Surat district on June 21, 1998
- Gujarat Vidyapeeth's, MSW students were oriented on Panchayati Raj

- Provided educational material to IGNOU on women empowerment and governance
- Helped planning of the WGWI meeting of women Sarpanches of six districts
- Vikas Adhyan Kendra, Yuvak Vikas Trust and AKJRSP used our published material for their training with PRI members
- Participated as resource persons in the training of SIRD (August 5-September 23, 1998)

## **2.8 UNNATI (Rajasthan)**

2.8.1 In Rajasthan, UNNATI was engaged in Panchayat Raj strengthening activities in three different regions.

- Panchayat Strengthening in Pugal Block of Bikaner District:

This cluster of Panchayat has been undertaken to derive lessons on Panchayat strengthening in desert areas. Subsequent to the Padyatra on Panchayat awareness building and consultations among PRI members and villagers, a core group was formed, During this process efforts have also been made to educate women and women PRI members on Panchayati Raj.

### **Formation of Sattarkata (Vigilance) Committee:**

The formation of Sattarkata Committee is a mandatory body under Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act to monitor, supervise and build transparency in Panchayat functioning. However, in most Panchayats either this committee has not been formed or dummy candidates have been put without people's consent. Efforts have been made to revive Sattarkata Samiti by conducting village meetings. In four Panchayats, Makeri, Gangajali, Aduri and Tharusar twelve meetings were organised. This year it was planned that along with June Gram Sabha meeting in all the Panchayats Sattarkata Samiti will be formed, However,, the government had postponed, the Gram Sabha meeting twice.

### **Developing new Women Leaders:**

Since Panchayat election is due in one and half years of time. UNNATI have been educating the potential women leaders on Panchayati Raj. This educational process will build confidence of the women to directly contest in Panchayat elections with better understanding of PRIs.

For the orientation of PRJ elected representatives, monthly meeting was held at all the five Panchayats. The meetings covered the issues of formation of Satarkata Samiti, Gram Sabha, Micro Planning, government programmes and village development.

### **Micro Planning:**

Gangajali Panchayat was selected for Micro Planning. In this Panchayat PRA was done in four villages. This exercise set up a methodology for village level planning. The villagers have already taken up the issue of canal management. They planned to take up the issue of child education.

### **• Panchayat Strengthening in Jawaja Block**

In Jawaja Block four Panchayats Naikala, Devata, Sarvena and Nagarkheda were taken up with the active support of UNNATI's local counter part NGO, MMVS. The activities undertaken were -

### • Management Training at Palakkad

With the aim of developing/enhancing the management capabilities of the PR1 members and other development actors, SAHAYI conducted a four day intensive training programme. It was attended by Gram Panchayat and Block Panchayat members from different Panchayats of Palakkad district. Thirty six participants attended the programme and of them 20 were PRI members.

Lecture, group discussion, sharing of experiences, case analysis, practical exercises, games, debriefing were the major methods used. The topics discussed in various sessions included various aspects related to development, current issues and challenges of development, decision making process, communication, leadership, programme planning, budgeting and project development. One of the immediate effects of this four day training programme was that there was a positive change in the participants' perception of training and its relevance to cope with the responsibilities and role they have to undertake as a development actor.

### • Leadership Training for PRI Members at Perumkadavila

The objective of the leadership training programme was to help the PRI members enhance their communication abilities and leadership styles. It was attended by 30 PRI members and resource persons of people's campaign of which 12 were women.

The subjects discussed were organising and group dynamism, decision making, co-operation and collaboration, communication, leadership and leadership styles, need assessment and programme preparation.

It was highlighted by the participants that the practical sessions and structured experiences were very useful to understand the subjects in detail. They further commented that the training was effective to understand the new problems related to their communication and leadership styles. Moreover, most of them stated that they will try to practice the lessons learnt from the training. Some of the participants mentioned that they need more intensive training programmes on programme planning and budgeting.

## 2.9.2 MICRO-PLANNING

### • Grass-roots Level Planning

I. Data Bank of West Kallada Panchayat: As part of its microplanning exercise, SAHAYI felt the need for generating a reliable data bank on the socio economic profile of the area for the formulation of micro plans. Based on this assessment it was decided to develop a data bank at the Panchayat level. It was discussed with the Panchayat Samithy members, officials and general public and finally based on the suggestions and requirements specified by various actors SAHAYI prepared a draft questionnaire. It was then supplied to different development actors at the Panchayat level and collected their comments for improvements.

Later, the draft questionnaire was finalised and an intensive two day training programme was organised for the women who were selected from the Panchayat for data collection. The PRI members also extended co-operation in data collection.

Around 3000 families were covered in the survey. SAHAYI PRI team members and other staff members facilitated and closely monitored the whole process.

The programme gave a whole new direction to SAHAYI's micro planning process. In fact, it was also an educational and learning process for all those who were actively involved in the activity. The data generation process is still on and compilation and analysis will begin once the data collection is over.

2. Promotion of Integrated Farming: As the next step of the microplanning process, the generated data regarding issues on agriculture, possibilities of integrated farming etc. were widely discussed with farmers, agricultural labourers Panchayat Samithy members, and officials of agriculture and animal husbandry departments. SAHAYI team members visited Pattambi Krishi Vinjan Kendra at Palakkad, Regional Agricultural Research Station at Kumarakom, Regional Research Station at Kottarakkara, Agriculture Development Agency (ADAK), at Thiruvananthapuram and made intensive discussions with the senior officials and scientists about the various issues of the local ecology including the acidic nature of the soil in the paddy fields and the possibilities of integrated farming and availability of support from the government agencies.

On the 30th of September, 1998 a one day consultative meeting of the farmers, Panchayat Samithy members, VO members and technical experts from ADAK and Krishi Vigjan was organised. The experts and the Director of SAHAYI facilitated the discussions.

The major objectives of the meeting were to examine the possibilities of integrated farming in West Kallada and to help them take collective decisions on experimenting i implementing the integrated farming methods.

The technical experts responded to some of the queries raised by the farmers. Later, it was mutually decided to organise an exposure visit for selected farmers lo places like Kuttanad where integrated farming had been successfully implemented. The facilitators agreed to help the farmers in developing and sustaining the process.

3. Promotion of Other Activities: SAHAYI successfully mobilised the women of the area to form an informal group called NATURE CLUB. The group under the guidance of SAHA YI planned and implemented some action oriented programmes like vegetable cultivation, planting of trees etc. The women also constituted a monitoring committee to monitor the activities.

One of the major outcome of the programme was the generation of enthusiasm and interest among the women in vegetable cultivation and tree planting which in future will help them to improve their health and financial status.

4. Skill development training programme: SAHA YT in collaboration with SAHA YI Educational Trust started a leather bag making training programme at West Kallada. At present, 10 women selected under DWCRA scheme are undergoing the training.

#### • EXPOSURE VISIT

SAHAYI team visited Mandore island in Kollam district where prawn farming is being done successfully. The purpose of the visit was to observe the operations and conduct discussion with the farmers on the socio-economic aspects of the activities. Based on these discussions and understanding, the economic viability and technical feasibilities of prawn farming were later discussed with the farmers in West Kallada Panchayat.

It was a mutual learning process both for the SAHAYI team and the farmers of West Kallada. One of the immediate outcome was that some of these farmers visited Mandore and held discussion with the local farmers and later expressed their interest in experimenting the. programme in West Kallada,

#### • RESOURCE SUPPORT TO SELECTED VO PARTNERS

During the period SAHAYI provided technical as well as nominal financial support to the partner local VOs working for Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions. They were Anamritha Prasthanam (Triruvananthapuram), West Kallada Social Welfare Society (Kollam), Anaswara Vanitha Samajam (Ernakulam), B.P. Moideen Seva Mandir (Kozhikode)

## • PANCHAYAT LEVEL INFORMATION CENTRES

SAHAYI already set up five Panchayat level information centres in collaboration with local VOs at Wayanad, Kasaragod, Trissur and Thiruvananthapuram. In these places the Panchayat Samithy members and local people entirely depend on the resource centres for PRI-related informations.

In order to upgrade the utility of the PRCs, symposia and discussions on Panchayati Raj and Rural Development were organised in collaboration with youth and women groups, SAHAYI collected latest government orders, circulars and other relevant information such as anti defection ordinance from government secretariat and Panchayat Directorate for the PRCs. SAHAYI team closely monitored the functioning of the PRCs and provided necessary guidance and support for their smooth functioning.

### 2.10 CYSD in Orissa

#### 2.10.1 Training

CYSD conducted a six day training programme on People Centred Planning which was held from 18-23rd May 1998. 13 participants from CYSD's PRI partners attended the training.

The purpose of the training was to orient the VO members on the process of preparing 'People Oriented Planning' and assist them to transfer these skills to the Gram Sabha and Palli Sabha members.

At the end of the programme each participating VO promised to conduct atleast two micro planning session in their operational areas.

PRI cell of CYSD also organised a training programme on Panchayati Raj for Ward Members, Sarpanches and Gram Panchayat secretaries with the co-operation of PRAYAS, Sundargarh and PRAYAS Karanjia, On an average 23 participants attended these programmes.

The purpose of the training programme was to orient the Panchayat level staff members on the PRI acts and the role of PRIs in grass root leadership development.

#### 2.10.2 Documentation

During the period CYSD collected and classified PRJ related news cuttings and prepared abstracts from them to disseminate the same among its PRI partners.

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