

PROCESS DOCUMENT

Facilitating People's Advocacy & Action for Mitigating the problem of Discrimination, Marginalization & Social Exclusion

GRAMYA SANSTHAN



Process Document

*Facilitating People's Advocacy & Action
for mitigating the problem of
Discrimination, Marginalization & Social Exclusion*

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Executive Summary

Gramya Sansthan with a vision to develop equitable and non exploitative society is working for the upliftment of the marginalized and socially excluded communities since last 23 years. To achieve the desired goal to empower socially excluded communities in Varanasi district, Gramya Sansthan entered in partnership with Poorest Area Civil Society (PACS) in Sept'2011. The key thematic areas of the project titled, **'Facilitating People's Advocacy & Action for Mitigating the problem of Discrimination, Marginalization & Social Exclusion'** are right to livelihood and right to basic services viz health, nutrition and education. During the four years of intensive intervention in 124 villages from 70 GPs of Sevapuri and Baragaon block of Varanasi district, the utmost focus is on formation and strengthening of community leadership among the target groups.

To develop community leadership among the Schedule Caste (SCs) and Muslim minorities, the main target groups, Gramya Sansthan strategically intervened to form and strengthen their community based organization. As the health & nutrition and livelihood is more likely to affect the well being of the women; collectivization and empowerment of women is the key prima facie of Gramya's intervention. Women based community organization popularly known as 'Mahila Manch' is formed and strengthened in all 70 project GPs. In all, 93 women CBOs have been developed in 2 blocks with a direct membership of 1295 women.

Motivated with the achievements of Mahila Manch, the landless labors and marginalized farmers were also brought together in the project areas to form 'Majdoor Kishan Manch', village based collectives of MGNREGA laborers. So far 35 such collectives have been developed which were equally participated by males and females. Youth are considered as change agents and can bring socio-economic reforms in the society. With this belief, Gramya Sansthan has recently also get involved to mobilize youths as 'Youth Groups' to aware excluded communities about their rights and entitlements. Up-till now, 36 'Youth Groups' has been formed with the youth membership of 545 males & females.

These community based organizations has come out in leadership roles to mobilize community to generate more & more demands for access to entitled rights. And on the other hand, they are raising their collective voices to build pressures on the block and district administration advocating for non discriminatory access to quality services for health, nutrition and livelihood. Number of issues were raised and addressed on the initiatives of CBOs.

In last four years, numbers of community mobilization campaigns were successfully implemented by Gramya Sansthan. The major campaigns include MGNREGA Labour Budget Campaign, Kaam Maango Abhiyaan, RSBY Pre-enrollment Campaign, School Chalo Abhiyaan etc. Various innovative tools like puppet shows, magic shows, street plays, film screening etc used for community mobilization. More than 15000 people were directly mobilized through various campaigns.

Through the campaign of SMC formation, the community leaders from excluded communities participated in SMC elections in 129 Primary and Middle Schools and many of them also became SMC members.

Community Organizations also took lead to strengthen the community monitoring of health and nutrition facilities and services in the village. In intervention villages, Mahila Manch members regularly visits their village Anganwadi to ensure that no entitled beneficiaries should be debarred of supplementary nutrition and immunization; they started questioning PDS shopkeeper about the

quality and quantity of ration distributed to the excluded communities HHs. Although the community monitoring process is still not very structured; but the community is aware about their rights and entitlements and is ready to question in case of poor service delivery.

The achievement and challenges faced by CBOs were also shared with the government officials, service providers and other CBOs through district/block level dialogues, advocacy meetings, sensitization workshops etc. Gramya also published its quarterly update named 'Jan Pahal' to share the success stories of CBOs and activities undertaken during last quarter to strengthen CBOs.

More than 60,000 families from excluded communities from 61 GPs in Sevapuri block and 9 GPs of Baragaon block are directly covered under the project intervention. And project has indirect reach to approximately 10,000 households. Some of the key achievements of Gramya Sansthan under PACS supported project can be jotted down as follows:

- 164 CBOs have been formed under the project. 93 of these are women's groups. The other 71 involve women, men and youth from socially excluded groups.
- 425 households have been supported to register for MGNREGA job cards.
- 1032 households have successfully demanded jobs under MGNREGA.
- 9684 children are now receiving hygienic Mid-Day Meals at school. 4988 (52%) are from socially excluded groups.
- 3360 women from socially excluded groups have given birth in institutions and 3220 women have accessed maternal health rights under the JSY scheme.
- 1754 households from socially excluded groups have been supported to register for RSBY health insurance smart cards and 73 RSBY Mitras (Friends) are helping families to access health care using their smart cards.
- 52 Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) have been improved and are now opening on time and providing nutritional support to children, pregnant and lactating women under the ICDS scheme.
- 2632 women and children from socially excluded groups have received nutritional supplements from these centres.

About Gramya Sansthan

Gramya Sansthan is a non-profit voluntary organization registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 with its registered office at Varanasi. Registered in the year 1992, Gramya started its intervention in the most backward, isolated and tribal dominated Naugarh block of Chandauli district (formerly a block of Varanasi district). Gramya Sansthan is also registered under FCRA, 1976 and 12AA of Income Tax Act. It is a women-headed organization that works to promote the principles of participatory democracy, transparency & accountability and equal rights for all citizens. Gramya Sansthan is currently working in selected districts of Uttar Pradesh.

Vision

Gramya's vision to create a better society based on the principles of equity and equality by uplifting marginalized communities through building their capacities to struggle for their rights.

Mission

The mission of Gramya is to empower the marginalized and socially excluded communities with focus on women and children to make them capable in leading their process of development and effective participation in the decision making.

Gramya's Programmatic Focus

- Empowering socially excluded and marginalized community by organizing them
- Ensuring Health & Nutrition, Education and Livelihood Rights of excluded communities.
- Rights of workers engaged in unorganized sector
- Ensuring Child Rights
- Promoting Rights of Adolescents and Youths
- Promoting gender equality and preventing violence against the women

Since last 23 years, Gramya is working to empower excluded communities to enable them to demand for their entitled rights and to promote their non discriminatory access to that by generating mass awareness, leadership development and collectivization of marginalized communities advocating for their rights. Gramya is making efforts to represent the issues of community based organizations of excluded communities at district/state and national level through its active participation in various CSO Networks, People's Movement etc.

Areas of Intervention & Target Group

- Working in Naugarh and Chakia block of Chandauli district focusing on the issues of right to education, right to food & nutrition, gender equality, violence against women, maternal & child health, rights of adolescent & youths and land rights.
- NGO partnership on the issues of rights of mining labors and women & child rights in Shankargarh block of Allahabad district.
- Working with the excluded communities in 70 GPs of Sevapuri and Baragaon block of Varanasi district under PACS Project. The project focus is to develop community leadership and

empower women to struggle for livelihood rights under MGNREGA and right to basic services. Women based community organizations are developed to capacitate women to raise their voices for the rights of the excluded communities to health & nutrition and right to education under RTE act.

Our Strength

- Working with most marginalized excluded communities include Schedule Caste (SCs), Schedule Tribe (STs), Muslim Minorities and Other Backward Class (OBCs).
- Formation & development of community based organization (CBOs) and community leadership.
- Planning & implementation of community mobilization campaigns for mass awareness and demand generation.
- Capacity building and sensitization of front line workers (FLWs).

Introduction

Gramya Sansthan working for the upliftment of the marginalized communities entered in partnership with PACS program in September 2011 under the project titled '**Facilitating People's Advocacy & Action for Mitigating the problem of Discrimination, Marginalization & social Exclusion**'. During the four years of intervention, the focus is on the empowerment of women and the schedule caste marginalized & excluded poor in selective 70 GPs of Sevapuri and Baragaon block of Varanasi district. Youths of community are also one of the groups which are focused by the intervention. The project aims to meaningfully engage:

- ✓ Women as community leader, motivator and facilitators for generating demands for entitled rights.
- ✓ Youths as facilitators to help the marginalized communities in access the services meant for them.
- ✓ Most marginalized communities as collective voice to negotiate with the development agencies from Village Panchayat to District Administration for more efficient delivery of health, nutrition, education and livelihood programs and services.

The key themes focused under PACS Project:

- **Right to Livelihood** – through MGNREGA
- **Right to Basic Services**- including Right to Education, Health and Nutrition.

Objective of the Project

The project aims to empower the most marginalized communities and developing community leadership so that they raise their voice for their rights. The socially excluded groups that the project focuses on are Schedule Caste (SCs) and Women. Youths of community are also one of the groups which are focused by the intervention.

The objectives of the intervention of Gramya Sansthan under PACS project in Varanasi district between 2011-15 can be jotted down as:

- Formation and strengthening of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Self Help Groups for women from excluded communities.
- Developing the leadership capacity of socially excluded communities especially among women and encouraging them to raise their voices strongly for their entitled rights.
- Formation and development of CBO's federations at cluster level block level and district level for advocacy and collective action for the rights of excluded communities.
- Raising community awareness and building the capacities of these CBOs on Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA); Right to Free & Compulsory Education Act,2009 (RTE); Janani Suraksha Yojna (JSY), a maternal health scheme; Rashtriya Swasthya BimaYojana (RSBY), a health insurance scheme and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Program.
- To develop a cadre of trained RSBY Mitra to raise awareness among the community and generate demands for RSBY.
- To ensure non discriminatory access to basic services related to health & nutrition, education and livelihood.

- To make service providers more responsive and accountable towards socially excluded groups.
- Partnering with the media and other stakeholders to disseminate information and lobby on issues of social exclusion.

Selection of Intervention Blocks and Geographical Coverage

Gramya Sansthan is having its registered office in Varanasi but was not having its direct presence in the district before its intervention under PACS program. Its major intervention is in Chandauli district, a district adjacent to Varanasi. So when the opportunity emerged to work with the excluded community in Varanasi district, Gramya instantly agreed to work upon it.



The project area block Sevapuri and Baragaon is around 20 kms from the Gramya's Office. Ms. Bindu, Secretary of the organization was having a regular touch with the community in selected blocks and Panchayats as she had worked as resource person (Coordinator) with Mahila Samakhya Pariyojana Govt. of India Ministry of Human Resource Development which was started in the year 1987-88 in Sevapuri block of Varanasi district. She worked for around four years as a regular basis. Later she worked as a guest consultant with Mahila Samakhya for conducting training for field workers and community leadership training. In this capacity she gave basic trainings and to women of the area and conducted reviews and evaluation of the programme. The area and all its villages, their issues and the people namely the women leaders are known to Gramya Sansthan.

Out of 8 development blocks, two blocks i.e. Sevapuri and Baragoan is selected under the PACS programme. In brief demographic features are as under according to 2001 census:-

In all 61 GPs of Sevapuri and 9 GPs of Baragaon block covering 124 revenue villages were selected for the intervention. In Sevapuri, 12000 HHs belonging to excluded communities are covered in 61 village Panchayats, of which 2000 Muslims and 10000 SC (Dalit) families. 9 Panchayats in Baragaon block is covering 2000 SC and 1000 Muslim households. Thus total 15000 families living below poverty line are covered under the PACS programme implemented by Gramya Sansthan. Average percentage of SC population of the total population in selected targeted villages is around 25%.

Details	Varanasi District	Sevapuri Block	Baragoan Block
Total	31,38,671	2,04,731	2,06,504
Male	16,49,187	1,06,098	1,03,560
Female Population	14,89,484	98,633	1,02,944
SC (in %)	13.9%	18% (36,451)	18.35% (37,903)
Sex Ratio	903	--	--
Literacy	66.1%	61.4%	52% (99141)
Male Literacy	77.9%	71.3%	60.49% (62,644)
Female Literacy	53%	45.3%	35.45% (36,497)

Feudal, patriarchal and male dominant social structure leading to discrimination, imbalanced power structure, along with exclusion of women, SCs and Muslim families was the prominent feature of the project area. In the selected blocks, the female population is less than the male. In Sevapuri block the number of male and female is 10, 6098 and 98,633 respectively where as in the block of Baragaon it is 1, 03,560 and 1, 02,944). Majority of women were illiterate in the selected block (45.3% in Sevapuri and 35.46% in Baragaon). Majority of non school going / dropout children belong to female population and or mostly from poor SC/Muslim families. Lack of awareness and access to basic rights including health & nutrition, education and livelihood put them in more vulnerable condition. Therefore, the Sevapuri and its adjacent Baragaon block were selected for the intervention.

Overview of Project Journey

2011-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Project activities began with staff recruitment § Capacity building of the Project team § Repo building in identified villages § Selection & training of community leaders § Formation of community based organizations in project GPs § Base line Survey § Rapid assessment survey on JSY § District level dialogue § Block level dialogue
2013-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Regularization of monthly meetings of CBOs § Cluster meetings of CBOs § Exposure visits § Capacity building workshop of Mahila Manch § Publication of newsletter – first issue published in Oct-Dec'2012 § Puppet Shows
2014-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § RSBY pre-enrollment campaign in Sewapuri block § Capacity building of SMCs § Exposure visits for Mahila Manch § Training of RSBY Mitra § Planning and orientation workshop for Mahila Manch § Kaam Maango Abhiyaan under MGNREGA § School Chalo Abhiyaan under SSA § Puppet Shows § Use of RTI by CBOs § Newsletter-Jan Pahal § Started working with Youth Groups § District level CBO Conclave in Varanasi
April to Sept'2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Issue based training with the youth groups § CBOs Federation Core Committee Training § District level SMC Convention § MNREGA Social Audit § IPuppet Shows § RSBY Van § Newsletter-Jan Pahal § District level Dialogue on Social Exclusion issues

Strategy & Key Intervention

Base Line Survey

Before initiating the project intervention in Varanasi district, needs was felt to understand the existing scenario of health & nutrition, education and livelihood status of the excluded community and existing level of their knowledge and access to various welfare programs of the government. Therefore a baseline survey was conducted. For this stratified random survey was conducted with a sample of 40 HHs per Gram Panchayat. A simple questionnaire was devised. Survey was conducted by trained Gramya team. Some of the key findings of the survey were:

- ✓ Total 2542 people were survey from rural areas of which 22.9% belongs to BPL and 57.8% were from APL category.
- ✓ About 48.4% population survey lived in kuchha houses, 26% in semi pacca and merely 25.6% were having pacca houses.
- ✓ About 59.2% were not aware about RSBY while 21.2% and 33.4% were not aware about JSY and SSA respectively. Even among those who responded to heard of these 3 programs about 84%, 91% and 72.5% respondents were partially aware of RSBY, JSY and SSA respectively.
- ✓ Although more than 96% population under different categories had heard of MGNREGA but majority of them were not aware of the provisions under the act.
- ✓ Although 97% children in the surveyed HHs were enrolled in schools but about 73% respondents had not at all responded on the questions related to MDM, facilities in schools, discrimination etc as they were not aware about the school.
- ✓ Merely 32% mother's breast feed their newborn child within an hour of birth. Majority of respondents remain silent on the questions related to health & nutrition due to lack of awareness.

The findings were helpful in planning and in taking forward the program implementation. It helps the team to understand the situation, knowledge and their access to services among the excluded communities. Team orientation was designed keeping the survey findings in view.

Selection of Project Team

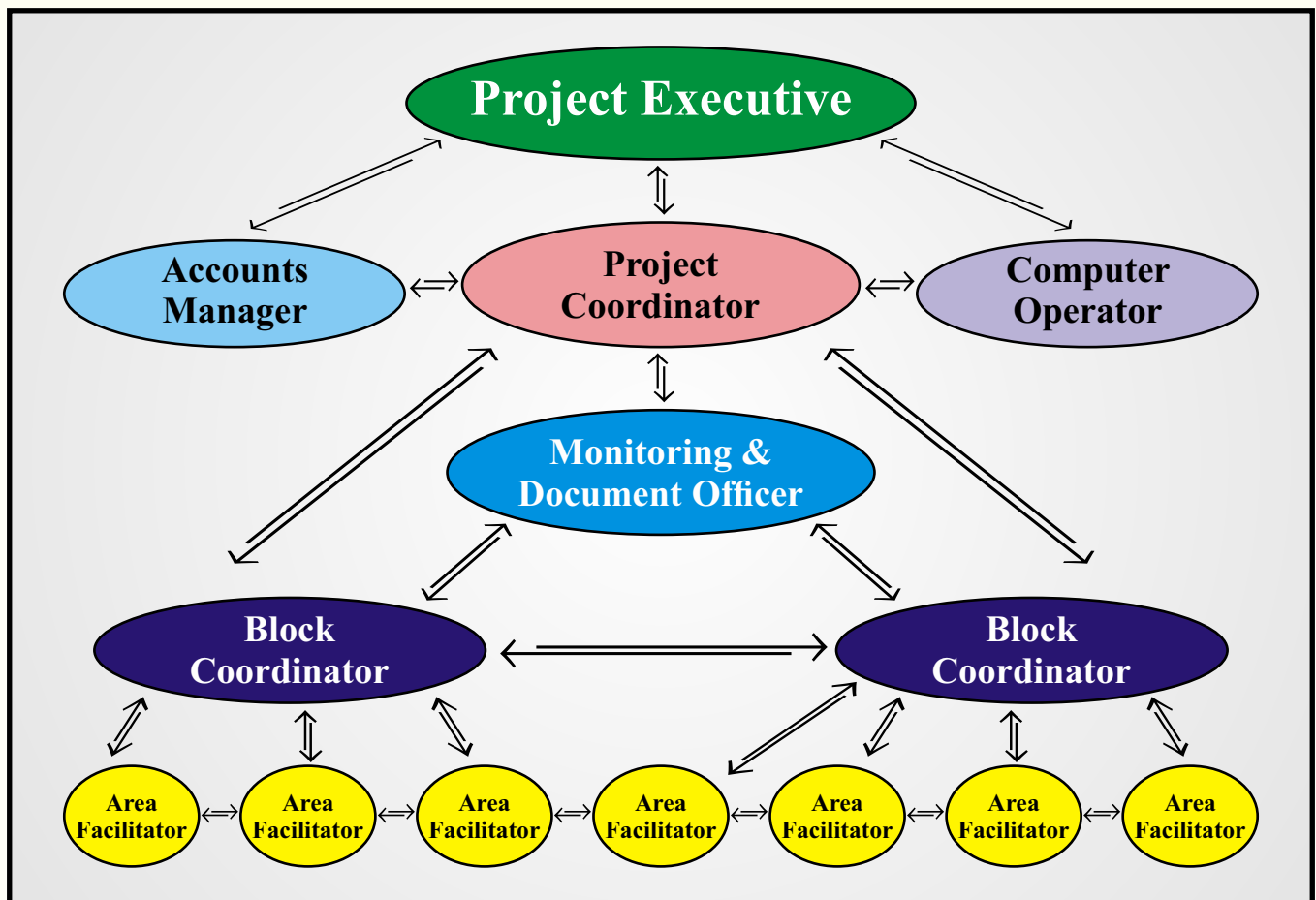
Project Team Structure

The PACS project intervention started in September 2011 with the selection of project team. The Area Facilitators forms the very base of the project team. Each Area Facilitators is responsible for 10 Gram Panchayats covering all the villages within the GPs. In all there are 7 Area Facilitators who are directly responsible for community mobilization and undertaking all the field interventions.

Area Facilitators are supported by Block Coordinators. Each block coordinators extend handholding support directly in 35 GPs. The Block Coordinators reports to Project Coordinator. Along with them, Monitoring & Documentation Officer (M&D), RSBY Coordinator, Computer Operator and Accountant are also the part of the project team. Executive Director is at the apex to provide guidance and motivational support to the project team.

Selection of Area Facilitators

One of the distinctive elements of Gramya intervention is its project team. All the field staff selected for this intervention was new to the development sector and had no previous professional experience of working with the community. All the women facilitators were home makers who had never come out of their homes.



However, they belong to the area and were well aware with the local issues and challenges. They were acquainted with the living conditions of the community and are also well versed with their local dialect. They are the part of the community for which they were supposed to work. This makes it easy for them to get intermingled with the community and mobilize them for their rights.

Another unique feature is that as the project utmost focus is on the mobilization of women, so women candidates have been selected as Field Facilitators/Area Facilitators. Initially, two male candidates were also selected but within few months of intervention, it was realized that mobilization were better in the areas where female field facilitators is engaged. Thus female field facilitators were deliberately selected for the intervention.

Capacity Building of Project Team

After the recruitment, another major challenge was building the capacities of the project team as the team has no previous exposure and understanding of the issues and methods to deal with the community. There was well structure capacity building plan for the project team. There were combination approaches which included peer learning, classroom trainings, sensitization, mobilization & counseling skills and exposure visits for this number of capacity building trainings, reorientation

workshops, exposure visits were provided to the project team by PACS and Gramya Sansthan. Along with this regular handholding support at the ground level were also extended by the organization functionaries at the apex.

Exposure Visit at Naugarh Block

Gramya Sansthan is having a very strong base at Naugarh where it is proactively engaged in community mobilization activities since the inception of the organization. So it was decided to organize an exposure visit of the newly recruited team directly in the field in Naugarh block where community leaders are themselves holding community meetings, raising their issues and finding community based solutions to their problems. Four days exposure visit provided field based training to the project team on community mobilization and leadership development.



Exposure visit helps the team to understand the basic steps of community mobilization and leadership development in a very easy going manner.

Capacity Building Trainings

- **Induction Training**

Three days residential training for the induction of the project team. It was a thematic training covering different issues including Health, Education and Livelihood program. Under this training, the team was oriented on the basic provisions of JSY, JSSK, RSBY, MGNREGA, RTE etc.

- **Trainings Organized by PACS**

PACS also organized 5 days residential training for the project team in New Delhi on thematic issues. Training was conducted by Pravah, an organization based at Delhi. Another follow up training was organized by PACS in Lucknow. During these trainings, the key focus is on using the various tools of community mobilization and handling issues of the community.

- **Capacity Building Workshops**

In Nov'2012, a capacity building workshop was organized to orient the team about issue based advocacy as how to differentiate between the problems and issues, use of various advocacy tools and finding community based solutions to address the problems. Participants were also trained about various acts like prevention of domestic violence act, prevention of atrocities against SCs & STs etc. Further two days capacity building workshop was organized in May'2014.

- **Refresher Trainings**

Gramya had also organized refresher training for its project team on regular basis. The objective of the refresher training is to provide update information about various welfare schemes/programs of the government and to provide handholding support to the team to address the existing challenges in their work.



Formation & Strengthening of Community Based Organization

Repo-building with the Community

Adequate time and energy was given by the project team for building strong relationship with the excluded communities in project areas. For repo-building, first of all door to door visits were made in the project villages through which project staff introduce themselves and build personnel relationship with the community and orient the community about the objectives of the Gramya Sansthan.

Initially, it was very challenging to mobilize excluded communities because they remain dominated since generations. Schedule caste and Muslims households were hesitant even to offer a glass of water to the Area Facilitators as they themselves had accepted that they belongs to lower caste. They were frightened to talk to strangers about themselves and their villages. But the Area Facilitators were made continuous stride to mobilize the excluded poor.



After that number of small group meetings was organized in the project villages to discuss the existing issues in the villages. Through such group meetings the community was provided the opportunity to come out with their own issues and not just to follow the organization's agenda. Everybody was welcomed in such community meetings including PRIs, Anganwadi Workers, ASHA workers, School Teachers, ANMs and other service providers in the village.

Toilsome efforts were made to approach the key influential persons, PRIs and the service providers through one to one meeting with them to fetch their support in Gramya's intervention and mobilizing community.

Identification & Capacity Building of Community Leaders

During the community meetings, there were some natural leaders who took leads in organizing the meetings, collectivizing the community to attend those meetings, raising the issues etc. Such Natural leaders were identified by the Area Facilitators after rounds meeting with them. In every Panchayat, at least two natural leaders were identified, so that one could take up the process in the absence of another to maintain the continuity in the community processes.

Once the natural leaders were identified, capacity building trainings were organized for them to build their capacities for collectivization of the community, to represent the community, understand the rights and entitlements of the excluded communities and raising the collective voices of the community to address the common issues. 3 days residential trainings were organized for them in batches. Around 40 community leaders participated in each batch. In all 168 community leaders from 70 GPs were identified and trained.



Gramya's Area Facilitators provides regular handholding support to these community leaders to mobilize the excluded communities and raising their issues at various platforms from village Panchayat to block and district level. Constant endeavors were made to identify and foster new potential leaders to strengthen the community process. Along with it, regular re-orientation and sensitization meetings were organized to motivate and capacitate community leaders.

Formation of Community Based Organizations

Trained community leaders were mobilized for collectivization of excluded communities. Motivated community leaders started forming their CBOs with 2-4 members allowing others to participate in their meetings to understand its objectives and processes. The objective of village based community organization is not to create a stretch between haves and have not but it aims to create awareness among the excluded communities about their rights and entitlements. It is meant for collectivization of the voices of the excluded poor, so that they can be heard.



Initially participation was very low in CBOs as most of the excluded community members in spite of being exploited by big landlords, influential upper caste community and Gram Pradhan, considered them as their godfathers who provides the employment and also borrows money to them. Earlier the excluded community doesn't have faith in CBOs. Area facilitators supported in mobilizing community by sharing small success stories from other villages. The sharing of stories from their neighboring villages had a strong motivational impact on the community.

Also community leaders and Area Facilitators extended one to one support to the community to address their small personal issues like getting their caste certificates, disability certificates, getting their ration cards, getting the pregnant women registered for ANC, helping the parents to enroll their children in school etc. This has helped to develop a strong bond between the community and Gramya. Community has developed firm faith in Gramya's endeavor for the rights of poor. This resulted in mobilizing community to support Gramya's intervention and actively participation in community organizations meant for them.

In the beginning, two forms of community organizations namely Mahila Manch and Majdoor Kishan Manch were developed. Later on in 2013-14, the concept of Youth Groups was emerged and developed. Once the people got organized as CBOs, they can be made actively aware as regard to their rights, contributions, responsibilities, and so on. It provides a platform to act upon and gives strength to fight against exploitation and injustice.

Name of CBO	Total no. of CBO formed	Total Members in the CBO	Total No. of Village Covered	Total No. of GPs Covered
Mahila Manch	93	1295	124	70
Majdoor Kishan Manch	35	615	124	70
Youth Group	36	545	50	70

Role of CBOs

Development of community based organization of excluded communities aimed at:

- Providing a platform for active participation and collaboration with community members.
- To aware excluded community about various welfare schemes/programs meant for them.
- To orient the excluded community about their legal rights and entitlements.
- To generate collective demands for quality & non discriminatory access to improved services.
- To collective raise the community voices for their rights and entitlements.
- To develop leadership among the excluded communities.
- To enhance the participation of excluded communities in democratic processes.

Mahila Manch, Women CBOs

Mahila Manch as the name suggest are the community based organizations of women. Women are worst suffers having poor access to services including health & nutrition, education and livelihood. Gramya Sansthan firmly believed in an old proverb that 'If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family'. Therefore, Gramya took the initiative to collectivize women to form their CBOs in the form of Mahila Manch.



Mahila Manch is a platform for women to collectively share their problems, raise their voices for their entitlements and finding solutions to the problems in an innovative manner. All the 70 GPs have at least one Mahila Manch. Some of the bigger Panchayats have more then one women CBOs. In all there are 93 women CBOs in Gramya's intervention area. JSY, RSBY and MGNREGA are the key focus areas of Mahila Manch.

In the initial years, women's active participation was very minimal, due to the limitations of being a woman in a patriarchal society. The women who did not have the freedom to raise their voice in the family and community could not very well have the courage to speak in front of their male colleagues. Therefore Gramya strategically form women's group where they can easily share their concerns and can raise their voices among themselves. Through the Mahila Manch, they generate the confidence to speak out for their rights. Mahila Manch provided them the opportunity to come out of their homes and approach block and district officials to get solutions to their problems. Through the Mahila Manch number of issues related to poor access to health facility, demand for money by service providers in lieu of services in public hospitals, non availability of medicines, discrimination of excluded communities were being raised and addressed through Mahila Manch.

Majdoor Kishan Manch, Labor Collectives

Majdoor Kishan Manch is primarily a group of landless laborers and marginal farmers from excluded communities. It basically aims to collectivize them to constitute CBOs of MGNREGA laborers to aware them about their livelihood rights under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Majdoor Kishan Manch is having both male and female as its members. Majdoor Kishan

Manch was formed after Mahila Manch as women got empowered to present their views in front of male members of the community. CBOs helped to generate demand of employment under MGNREGA. Women used to face discrimination under MGNREGA as Gram Pradhan used to refuse to provide employment to female members; employment was not generated on the demands of the excluded poor. Such issues were collectively raised through Majdoor Kishan Manch. Gram Panchayat were also pressurized to generate employment when the job cardholders collectively approached Panchayat demanding for work. It has helped to develop confidence among the vulnerable poor to appeal to higher authorities for justice.

Youth Groups

Learning from the experiences of the Mahila Manch and Majdoor Kishan Manch, need was felt to mobilize youths as well to speed up the level of awareness among the community and to facilitate community processes related to JSY, RSBY, SMC and MGNREGA. Development of youth groups provided opportunities to youth to become more responsible citizen and develop more accountable institutional systems within the Panchayat.

Although, youth groups formation started at a very later stage but youths actively got engaged very soon. Youth group played prominent role in raising community awareness about various government programs. Many of the youth including both male and female got selected as SMC members and also become RSBY Mitra to facilitate the community to demand and apply for RSBY smart cards and to support them to file their claims in case of hospitalization. 36 youth groups have been formed in the project area with the total membership of 545 youths including 158 females.

Empowerment of CBOs

CBOs were empower through regularizing their monthly meetings to collective discuss their issues and finding community based solutions to them. They were provided with opportunities for inter learning through participation in cluster meetings. They were also given exposures through exposure visits and through participation in various meetings and workshops at block and district level.

Regularization of Village meetings

After the formation of CBOs in different Gram Panchayats, the first and foremost task was to regularize its monthly meetings, so that the members can sit together and discuss their issues. To empower the community organizations, it is important that members should collectively sit together and talk. To strengthen their CBOs, it was collectively decided to fix a particular date in a month for holding their monthly meeting. Every CBOs have decided its own date and time in consultation with Area Facilitators. Area Facilitators also joins them during their monthly meeting to re-orient them with new schemes, updated information and help them in addressing their issues and plan their strategy and action plan for next month. This helps to foster the enthusiasm and new energy in the group. Monthly meetings has been regularized for mahila manch in all 70 GPs and that of 35 Majdoor Kishan Manch.

Cluster Meetings

Along with their regular monthly meeting, the cluster meetings of CBO provided the members with the inter-learning platform to share their achievements, learning and existing challenges. This has a great motivational impact on CBOs to perform even better than their neighboring CBOs. The cluster is strategically divided in such a manner that members don't need to travel a long distance to attend the

meetings. A cluster consists of 4-5 neighboring villages. Cluster meetings are organized on quarterly basis. Cluster meetings helps to develop 'we feeling' among various CBOs and is a first step towards development of CBOs federation at block and district level. Collective advocacy actions are being promoted through cluster meetings.

Exposure Visits

Exposure visit of the Mahila Manch Members in listed Hospital under RSBY: Gramya Sansthan has organized exposure visits in hospitals empanelled under Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY). Exposure visits aims to educated Mahila Manch about the various components of RSBY, use of smart cards and accessing empanelled health facility in case of hospitalization. This helps to generate great deal in awareness among the women and to clarify their myths that accessing health facility requires a huge amount of out of pocket expenditure. Visiting hospital and discussing freely with the hospital authorities helps the rural women to overcome their fears in visiting doctors and to build their self confidence. These Mahila Manch members when return to their villages after exposure visits oriented other villagers about RSBY benefits and use of smart cards. In all 315 Mahila Manch members from 95 villages were benefitted through exposure visits organized by Gramya from time to time.



Planning and Orientation Workshop

Gramya organized two annual planning and orientation workshop for community leaders of Mahila Manch in 2013 & 2014. During the workshop discussion were held around the thematic areas as well as regional problems of the community. Participatory discussion and planning were held for formation of also talked about the plan of the organization that the organization wanted to make a federation of Mahila Manch. Gramya shared its vision to create a federation at every level i.e from village to block and to a district level. And this federation will work around 5 thematic areas of MGNREGA, Health, Education, Nutrition and Others (Domestic violence and PDS). And for each of these issues separate thematic committees will be formed so that members of the federation can share the responsibilities among themselves.

During the workshop the participants were also oriented about the group; its needs & importance and the role of community leaders in address the issues of the community. Resource person also oriented the participations as how to identify the problems of excluded communities in their village, analyzing them and finding community based solutions to them and getting their entitled rights.

The organization also organized two days thematic orientation workshop for the Mahila Manch members from time to time. And in these workshops the organization oriented them about the revised rules of MGNREGA, JSY, RSBY, Nutrition, Education and the issues which were prioritized by all the participants. In this workshop the organization also told about the MGNREGA labour budget and the SMC formation.

Awareness Building & Community Mobilization for Demand Generation

During the four years of intervention Gramya has made concerted efforts to raise awareness among the community about various welfare programs and schemes through which excluded communities can be benefitted. By generating mass awareness about various thematic issue including JSY, RSBY, RTE & SMC and MGNREGA, efforts were made to mobilize community to generate their demands among the excluded communities. Along with CBO formation & strengthening for demand generation, various tools of community mobilization and awareness generation were used. It includes widespread use of IEC material in the form of handbills, posters & newsletters along with puppet shows, magic shows, community mobilization campaigns on various themes etc. Last but not least, CBO conclaves at State & district level organized by PACS played a very vibrant role in mobilizing excluded community for social change.



Puppet Shows

Organizing puppet shows was one of the key community mobilization strategy adopted by Gramya. Puppet shows were organized at the villages centre and around the hamlets dominated by excluded communities. Puppet shows were organized on different themes like MGNREGA, RSBY, SMC etc. The theme of the puppet shows organized during the quarter was decided on the basis of the priority focused area in that particular quarter. For example, during the pre-enrollment period of RSBY, puppet shows covered the various components of RSBY like registration of smart cards & its benefits, hospitalization benefits etc, while puppet shows on MGNREGA were held before the 'Kaam Maango Abhiyaan', a campaign for demand generation under MGNREGA. Similarly, RTE and role of SMC was the theme of puppet shows during 'School Chalo Abhiyaan', campaign to ensure 100% enrollment under RTE Act 2009.



Puppet Shows were successful in fetching attention of illiterate marginalized poor as they could easily understand the message demonstrated in a puppet story depicting a sort of similar problems and situation. Puppet shows has resulted in huge mobilization of the community and especially in generating their demands for RSBY smart cards.

RSBY saved Durga's life

RSBY saved Durga's life Durga Devi, resident of Harinathpur Panchayat in Baragaon block is a marginalized poor surviving as daily wage laborer. When the Gramya Sansthan started women mobilization in the village, she also became a member of women's group in the village. With an objective to orient the women's groups about RSBY scheme, Gramya had organized an exposure visit to a Hospital in Badagaon block. Dr. Surendra Agrawal and his team oriented CBO members about the procedure to get smart card and its usage.

Durga was carefully listening to it and at the end, she showed a boil in her head to the Doctor and asked whether it can also be treated under RSBY as it was painful. Dr. Agrawal examined her and advised for immediate removal of cyst as it was dangerous.

Durga Devi was immediately issued with the RSBY card and on the very next day; she was operated to remove a 150 grams cyst from her head. On the first day, she was not provided with the food, so she made a complaint to the doctor. After that she got regular meals in the hospital till she was admitted. She was also given Rs.100/- for travelling back to home.

After returning, she shared the benefits of RSBY in the village and immediately two women who were advised to remove their ovaries decided that to take the benefit of RSBY card for getting operated. This resulted in generating a positive environment in the village towards RSBY scheme.

Magic Shows through RSBY Van

Under RSBY Campaign, a specially designed RSBY Van was put in motion to educate and aware community about RSBY and motivates them to register themselves for health insurance under RSBY. A van was decorated with some IEC and a magician who conducted magic shows to spread mass awareness about RSBY schemes and its entitlements. Magic shows were organized in all 70 Gram Panchayats covered under project intervention during Feb-March'2015. It proved to be a very entertaining way for mass awareness. During the magic shows, the toll free number and the contact person including RSBY group members and RSBY Mitra were informed to the Participants so that people can contact for clarifications and any information regarding RSBY. A total 7988 people watched RSBY magic shows in their villages including 2753 Women, 2327 Men, 2783 Children. About 125 Panchayat level duty bearers and service providers including Teachers, AWWs, ASHAs, RSBY Mitra, ANM, Village Pradhan and Members of PRIs, Rojgar Sevak, BDC members, Safai Karmchari, Prerak etc also attended and welcomed magic shows in their village. Indirect reach of the messages are more than the direct reach with people.

After the magic show, the village level meeting was also organized by Gramya team to respond to the queries of the community.

Handbills/ Posters/ IEC

Handbills and posters are widely used to spread mass awareness about various new schemes and its entitlements. Handbills & Posters were designed in a very simple language with adequate pictorial representation, so that it could be easily understood even by common man. Thematic handbills were designed to spread awareness about various provision of the given scheme; its importance for the well being of entitled beneficiaries; entitlements and how to access its benefits. During the four years of intervention, Gramya developed Handbills on ICDS, Maternal Health, Right to Free and Compulsory

Education Act (RTE), School Management Committee (SMC), Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Along with it, pictorial posters were developed on Village Health & Nutrition Day, Behatar Shiksha Haq Abhiyaan and Services catered through ICDS.

Handbills and posters were widely disseminated in project villages and had a tremendously in mobilizing community to come forward to demand their entitlements.

Awareness Campaigns

With an objective of mass mobilization of the community to generate demands for access to quality services without any discrimination on any grounds, various thematic awareness campaigns were launched and successfully implemented by Gramya. The major campaigns include MGNREGA labour budget campaign, Kaam Maango Abhiyaan, RSBY pre enrollment campaign, School Chalo Abhiyaan etc. More than 15000 people were directly mobilized through various campaign held by Gramya Sansthan in last 3 years. While the number of indirectly mobilization through CBOs and individual villagers and service providers were much higher. The campaign strategically designed to get aligned with the timeline of the district administration to organize various activities. For example RSBY pre-enrollment campaign was organized in the month when the district administration had planned to organize camps to get demands applications for smart cards. Similarly labor budget campaign was initiated before the initiation of process of labour budget preparation through Gram Sabha.



Gramya organized various campaigns in close coordination with the government departments and therefore received great support from the officials at district & block level and service providers at the

Empowered Women Demanded for Employment

Mahila Manch, Khemapur in Sevapuri block is actively engaged in raising community awareness about their rights and entitlements. They regularly hold their monthly meetings on the 7th of every month to discuss on the issues related to health, nutrition, RSBY, MGNREGA etc. During one such meeting on Sept'2013, the Gramya's Area Facilitator oriented them about the provisions of MGNREGA to demand for employment. After getting informations, Mahila Manch members decided to write a demand application to demand for atleast 14 days of employment under MGNREGA. 17 women signed the joint application and collectively approached Gram Pradhan to submit their job demand.

Gram Pradhan was shocked to see that 17 women collectively demanding for work under MGNREGA. Initially, he tried to manipulate by saying that at present no work is available in Panchayat. He urged them to go to the block Panchayat and demand work from them. But women firmly said that we will not go anywhere, Gram Panchayat had to accept our application by giving receipt. And they further warned Gram Pradhan that if employment was not provided to them within 15 days, they will submit their claims for unemployment allowances. After submitting their applications, women went back to their homes.

After two days, they were called to Gram Panchayat and were provided 8 days of employment. This has resulted in strengthening the community's faith on community organization.

ground level. School Chalo Abhiyaan was an excellent example to it. Empowered Women Demanded for Employment

Labour Budget Campaign : 10 days MGNREGA labour budget campaign was organized in 7 and 3 Gram Panchayats of Sevapuri and Baragaon block respectively in Aug'2013. During the campaign, the organization oriented PRIs and Gram Sabha members about the process of preparing MGNREGA labour budget in a participatory manner.

Campaign for Participation of Excluded Communities in SMC : During the campaign for formation of School Management Committee in a democratic manner, Gramya participated in the 129 SMC of primary schools as well as middle schools. Campaign was launched between July-Aug'2013 with an objective to promote the participation of excluded communities in SMC. The community leaders from excluded community were elected at SMC members in number of schools is the biggest achievement of SMC.

RSBY Pre Enrollment Campaign : Similarly as a result of the pre enrollment campaign in 2013-14, about 9972 people got enrolled for RSBY smart card. Previously, the demand of smart card was very low due to lack of awareness about the schemes. During the pre-enrollment campaign, organization worked in close coordination with village ASHAs.

Kaam Mango Abhiyaan : Apart from that the Gramya organized campaign named Kaam Maango Abhiyaan and under this campaign total 284 excluded poor from 12 panchayats of the Sevapuri block and 2 panchayats of Baragaon blocks demanded for employment under MGNREGA.

School Chalo Abhiyaan : Organization also remained actively engaged with School Chalo Abhiyaan in partnership with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan. Under this campaign the organization holder rallies and other village level activities to mobilize parents of out of school and drop out children to enroll them in schools. Total 43 primary schools and 5 pre secondary schools from the 42 villages of Sevapuri block and in the 8 primary schools and 4 pre secondary schools among the 9 villages of Baragaon block were covered during the campaign. Under this campaign the school teachers and also School Management Committee (SMC) members also participated actively.



CBO Conclaves

State and district level CBO conclaves organized by PACS in subsequent years 2014 & 2015. It were organized to celebrate the struggle and achievements of the community leadership to bring rights and entitlements of socially excluded groups. “Jan Utsav” aims to strengthen the network of community based organization and foster advocacy actions by demonstrating the leadership skills and preparedness among excluded communities to struggle for their rights. It witnessed the presence of senior government officials, academicians, distinguished social activities and other eminent individuals. Jan Utsav, Uttar Pradesh in 2014 and Jan Utsav Varanasi in 2015 turned out to be very successful events, as it filled the community leaders with the energy and enthusiasm to further strengthen their struggle, “Our Voice Our Rights”



Advocacy Actions for improved service delivery

Block and District Level Advocacy Dialogues

Gramya on the one hand has made toilsome efforts for mass mobilization of the community to generate the demands from the excluded communities for the quality services. Parallel to that it also work with the district administration and its line departments to improve the supply of services at their end so that the vulnerable poor can easily access it.

Block and district level advocacy dialogue provides a direct platform to community leaders to share the existing problems and challenges at the grassroots in accessing the services. Various issues like unavailability of the services at the facility, discriminatory attitude of the service providers towards excluded communities, issues related to corruption were addressed through such dialogues. Advocacy dialogues bring together the administrative authorities at district & block level, services providers, PRIs and CBO leaders at a common platform for collective discussion to address the existing problems.



In last four years, thematic dialogues were organized at district and block level to fetch the attention of the district administration on that issue for required corrective actions. In 2012, the district and block level dialogues were held in Sept'2012 on the theme of Janani Surksha Yojana and maternal health. During the dialogue, the Gramya team shared the finding of social audit conducted by Gramya in 27 villages to know the status of out of pocket expenditure incurred by the beneficiary to access institutional deliveries under JSY. This helps to highlight the issues related to corruption and discrimination practiced by village ASHA and para-medical staff in the hospital. The report of the social audit was shared with the District CMO and BMO of respective block. The experts also oriented participants about JSY norms and urged them to aware community not to give any money to ASHAs and other service providers to access JSY benefits as the schemes is meant to promote the maternal health rights of the women.

In 2013 and 2014, the district level dialogues were organized on Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) to discuss the plan for pre enrollment drive, errors in smart cards and challenges in accessing health services in empanelled hospitals under RSBY. In this dialogue other CSO representatives also shared their experience of working on the issue and raised the issue of issuance of smart cards to the non eligible households. Dr. Chourasiya, CMO urged the empanelled hospitals for being sensitive towards the health care needs of the excluded communities.

Gramya also organized one day long district level RSBY sharing and grievance redressal meeting in March,2015 at Varanasi in collaboration with Sahbhagi Shikshan Sansthan. Along with the CBO representatives, empanelled hospitals also raised their grievances for delay in payment for the services. It provided a platform to RSBY Mitras to share their experiences of working on RSBY.

Newsletter

'Jan Pahal', a quarterly update of Gramya is means to share the progress, achievements and challenges faced by the community organization and Gramya in their endeavor to empower the

excluded communities to struggle for their rights. The quarterly newsletter was started by Gramya under PACS program in Oct'2012 and so far 10 updates have been published.

Along with sharing the key interventions made by Gramya, it's a major platform to share the success stories of CBOs. The stories of change have been shared with the wide community to show how the Mahila Manch and Majdoor Kishan Manch have struggled hard to achieve their entitled rights for safe motherhood and dignified life. It has a motivational impact on the other CBOs in the district and they could easily connect themselves with it as they are facing almost similar situations. Sharing of success stories develops confidence among CBOs and community leaders and giving the vibrant energy to struggle for the rights of the last person in the village. It also serves as a platform to educate CBO members about the new provisions under various welfare programs of the government.

Also the newsletter have been shared with the district & block officials and services to sensitize them and to enlighten them about the ground realities of the implementation. Jan Pahal serves as both sharing and advocacy tool and has remarkable impact on the policy makers, service providers and other stakeholders.

Sensitization workshops with PRIs

Panchayat Representatives plays a very vital role in implementation and monitoring of various schemes/ programs like RSBY, JSY, MGNREGA, PDS,SSA, MDM etc. Therefore, it is critically important to sensitize them towards the health, education and livelihood needs of the excluded poor. Sensitized PRIs can effectively curb or minimize social exclusion in service delivery of the welfare programs. Gramya had organized 4 sensitization meetings for PRIs at regular intervals. Many of the PRIs are themselves not aware about various policies and programs due to which they are unable to intervene and acts acts a puppet in the hands of the Secretary. The sensitization meetings provided opportunity to orient PRIs about revisions in the provisions of acts and schemes like MGNREGA, JSY, RSBY and RTE. During the sensitization meeting on MGNREGA, the PRIs were oriented about EFMS system, labour budget, e-muster roll generation, new wage rates etc. Similarly, during the sensitization workshop on RSBY, PRIs were made aware about smart card and roles of PRIs in implementation of RSBY scheme.



Apart from that the organization organized two block level dialogue with the PRI members on the issue of RSBY and shared some success stories related to RSBY and oriented them about the challenges and issues identified during the RSBY enrollment last year. PRIs were sensitized to extend their support in RSBY enrollment in current year. PRIs were also educated about their roles and responsibilities as the representative of the community.

Thematic Activities & Achievements

Under the PACS Project, Gramya Sansthan utmost thrust is on Health issues of the excluded communities. Even under Health, two schemes namely Janani Suraksha Yojana and Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana were targeted. Along with the health, other themes focused by Gramya Sansthan include rights to nutrition, right to education and MGNREGA.

Health – Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana

Under Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana Campaign, Gramya has strategically designed its activities in 3 phase namely pre-enrollment, during enrollment and post enrollment activities.

Pre Enrollment Campaign

In the pre-enrollment period, the utmost focus was on raising mass awareness about RSBY scheme, its benefits and entitlements. In the pre-enrollment period activities like community meetings, puppet shows, film & magic shows through RSBY Mobile Video Van, training of RSBY Mitra were taken up. In the pre-enrollment period, community meetings were organized on monthly basis through which people were made aware of the RSBY scheme.



Wall writings depicting simple message on RSBY scheme norms and benefits were taken up in 45 villages. RSBY Mobile Van was most significant move towards community mobilization on RSBY. In 2014, Mobile Van was decorated with IEC and LED TV through which a documentary film on RSBY 'Haro Jan Ki Peer' was shown in 73 villages of 70 GPs. About 6265 men, women and children watched the film. About 199 PRIs and Service Providers were also present during the film show. In 2015, mobile van was endowed with Magician who demonstrated magic tricks in 70 GPs and aware community about RSBY in an entertaining manner. Along with this puppet shows were organized in different villages to demonstrating a story on RSBY 'Heera ki pida kaise dur hui'. More than 10,000 vulnerable poor from excluded communities were made aware about the various mobilization activities in the pre enrollment campaign.

Along with it, Gramya also organized sensitization meetings with PRIs and district level advocacy dialogues to raise the existing challenges in RSBY enrollment with the district and block officials.

Facilitation Support during RSBY Enrollment

During the enrollment campaign, Gramya team extended direct support with the department in the enrollment camps. It mobilized excluded communities to come out of their homes to enroll themselves for smart card. Gramya's team and community leaders were present in more than 125 enrollment centers in 70 GPs in project villages. As a result 5915 HHs in Baragaon and 9404 HHs in Sevapuri block were enrolled for smart cards with the direct intervention of Gramya.



Access to Health Facility Improved with Awareness on RSBY

Pachwar village being a remote and backward village of Sevapuri block, the community is having very poor access to health services. The nearest PHCs is located at a distance of 4kms and is about 18kms from block headquarter. Excluded community in Pachwar was mainly dependent on local quacks for their health care needs.

Omprakash, a dalit poor was distressed by the prolonged illness of her daughter. Her daughter Sadhna, 14 years was having severe pain in her abdomen since last 3-4 months. They have tried everything suggested to them, but no relief for Sadhna.

One day Omprakash met with Lalji from neighboring Bhitkuri village. Lalji's wife Champa is an active of Mahila Manch. Lalji told Omprakash that his wife is recently operated for tumor using the benefits of RSBY smart card. She received good treatment that too free of cost. He suggested Omprakash also to take his daughter to the Sarojni Naidu Hospital, Lohta which is an RSBY empanelled hospital.

Lalji accompanied Omprakash to the hospital for Sadhna's treatment. After Sadhna's examination, doctor had recommended for her ultrasound. But when the hospital administration cross checked their RSBY smart card, they informed Omprakash that the smart card although possess the photograph of Sadhna but her name is missing in the smart card. Omprakash was suggested to go to CMHO office, Varanasi to rectify his smart card to add his daughter's name in the list of beneficiary. Omprakash immediately went to Varanasi with his daughter and requested for correction in his smart card. His card got rectified on the same day.

Next day, ultrasound was performed and she was diagnosed for appendices. She was operated for the removal of appendices and got discharge after her recovering in 7 days. She received 5 days medicines and Rs.100 for traveling back to home.

Post Enrollment Interventions

In the post enrollment period also Gramya remained actively engaged with the community. Hospital exposure visits were organized for Mahila Manch members to help them to overcome their fear of visiting health facility. This helps them to understand the more and more about the benefits of smart card. Gramya also provided handholding support to Mahila Manch members in accessing hospitalization benefits in case of illness.

Health-Janani Surksha Yojana

Rapid Assessment Survey on Access to Maternal Health Benefits under NRHM

Gramya conducted a rapid assessment survey in Sevapuri block of Varanasi district to study the out of pocket expenditure a women needs to incur to access of maternal health benefits including institutional deliveries, medicines, transportation etc under JSY and Janani Express (102 services) schemes of NRHM.

The survey was carried out in 1 CHCs, 3 PHCs and 5 SHCs of Sevapuri block. A total sample of 62 women beneficiaries from 27 villages was taken for the purpose of study. The survey revealed that:

- Out of the 62 women surveyed, 38 women reported to incur out of pocket expenditure to purchase medicines. Average out of pocket expenditure was about Rs. 176.

- 44 women survey have incurred an average expenditure of Rs. 182 on transportation to avail the benefits of institutional delivery.
- About 7 women had paid registration fee from Rs. 10 up to Rs. 90. Average registration fee was Rs.12.
- 44 women had reported to pay a sum of Rs. 10730 to ANM for institutional deliveries. Average amount paid was Rs. 173.
- Average Rs. 67 was paid to Dai to conduct delivery in public health facility.
- And average Rs. 27 was paid to computer operator to get their JSY incentives.

The rapid survey helped the Gramya team to understand the challenges that women were facing to avail maternal health benefits under NRHM. The Mahila Manch were formed and strengthened on the basis of the findings of survey. The findings of the survey was also share with the district and block administration.

Dalit Women Protested against the Bribery Demand under JSY

Rampa w/o Premshankar from Chitrasenpur village got her labour pain on an evening in Feb'2015. As Primary Health Center, Sevapuri is located 16 kms from Chirasenpur, they called 102 ambulance service to reach health facility for institutional delivery. Rampa's inlaws and one of her relative Baila Devi accompanied her.

After her delivery, Staff Nurse of PHC approached Rampa's family and demanded for Rs.500/-. Baila Devi rebuffed saying that delivery is free of cost under Janani Suraksha Scheme. But Nurse said that it is for sweets. On this Baila devi said that we will definitely distribute sweets among the hospital staff but Nurse demanded to have money and not the sweet. She argued with them for long. Finally Rampa's mother in law gave Rs.300 to her.

After some time, Nurse again came back to them and demanded for Rs.500/-. They said that we had already given you Rs.300. On this Staff Nurse said that I had given the same to Dai for delivery support. She again insisted that I had spent 3-4 hours in delivery room in early month, so I also need money for my efforts. As Baila Devi, member of Mahila Manch, is aware of their entitled rights immediately made a call to Chief Medical Officer at Varanasi and informed him about the bribery demands from Staff Nurse. CMO asked her to give a phone to Nurse and scolded the Nurse for her deeds. After that Staff Nurse apologized Baila and other and retuned their Rs.300/- given to her. Rampa also received Rs.1400/- for JSY benefit on her discharge from the hospital. This is how the awareness among the community helped to check on the bribery demands in public health facility under JSY.

District level Dialogue on JSY

District level advocacy dialogue was organized to share the finding of rapid assessment survey with the district administration and service providers. District administration noticed the grievances raised during the dialogue and gave assurance to bring reforms in maternal health services. This also resulted in strengthening of Gramya's network with district administration, its line departments and CSOs.



Demand for Quality Service by Mahila Manch

Collectivization of women through Mahila Manch made them courageous enough to speak for their entitled health rights under NRHM. They started to demand fearlessly to avail quality and free of cost services. Even objected the unethical demands for money from services providers (ASHA, ANM, and Paramedical Staff) in lieu of the services in Public Health Facility. They started questioning the doctors and para-medical staff, if the entitled benefits were not made available to them.

When these women shared their stories with Mahila Manch and other villagers as how they succeeded to realize the entitled benefits and rights, it motivated others also raised their voices for their entitled rights.

Right to Nutrition

Social Audit

A social audit was conducted in Aug' 2013 to know the status of ICDS services and its accessibility to excluded communities. Social Audit was conducted in 31 GPs of Sevapuri block and 5 GPs of Baragaon block of Varanasi district with the active involvement of community organizations and ICDS beneficiaries. In all, social audit was carried out in 93 anganwari centers of 36 GPs. The key findings of the social audits were as follows:

- Out of the 1031 pregnant women registered in ICDS centers, 32 women were not getting supplementary nutrition.
- 945 lactating mothers were registered but 21 were devoid of supplement nutrition.
- More than 95% adolescent girls and 50% children under 5 years of age were reported not to receive any supplementary nutrition from their anganwadi center.
- Merely 15.4% anganwari centers have their own building, rest were running either in Primary School, Panchayat Bhawan or rented rooms.
- No regular meetings conducted for Matri Samiti or VHSCs, committees to monitor health & nutrition services in the village.
- Village Health & Nutrition day not organized by majority of anganwadi centers.

A public hearing was organized to share the findings of the social audit at larger platform. Public Hearing was participated by the officials of ICDS and Health Department, ICDS workers, Panchayat Representatives and the community. This helps to address the problems related to poor services delivery at ICDS centers in the village.

Puppet Shows on ICDS

With an objective to mobilize communities to demand for ICDS services and raise their voices in case of poor service delivery by anganwadi worker. Number of puppet shows was organized in project village to aware community about the objective of ICDS, six types of service delivered through anganwadi center and orient them about the roles and responsibility of the anganwadi worker.



Monitoring by CBOs

Mahila Manch played active role in monitoring of services at Anganwadi Center and Ration Shop under Public Distribution System. Previously, as they were unaware about their rights and used to plead at Anganwari Center and Ration Shops to access its benefits. And even if, somebody asks for their

SMC Monitoring MDM Quality in School

Poor quality of MDM is no more an issue in Primary School of Basuhan village of Kardhana Panchayat in Sevapuri block. But this was not so before Oct'2013. One day in sept'2013, overcooked Chapatis were served in MDM. Children were unable to eat them, so they rebuff the MDM. One of the student named Rambabu took the chapattis and went back home. He showed Chapatis to her mother Phoola Devi, who is also the member of School SMC. Phoola Devi collected other SMC members and all collective reached school. They also called Gram Pradhan and requested him to come to school. They questioned School Headmaster about the quantity and quality of MDM. Children also informed that only one Chapati is served to them. Phoola devi raised question that government supply 100 grams of foodgrains per child, so minimum two chapatis should be served to every student in MDM.

Initially, the Headmaster denied having poor quality and quantity of MDM, but then he said that mistake was made on the part of cook. However, the SMC members intervened and said that from today the two members of SMC will regularly visit school to check the quality of MDM and will go for monthly stock taking of Ration supplied to school for MDM. The awareness of SMC members who are also active member of Mahila Manch resulted in supply of quality nutritious food to children.

rights, they were not being heard. Mahila Manch provided a platform to women to know their rights and entitlements. Members of Mahila Manch collectively got the courage to question the service providers and to complaint the higher authorities in case of poor delivery. Also the Anganwadi Workers and their helpers were also motivated to attend the meetings of Mahila Manch. This in turn help in sensitizing them towards the health and nutritional needs of excluded communities. This resulted in improvising the nutrition services at Anganwadi centre.

Right to Education under RTE Act

Enhancing the Participation of Excluded Communities in SMC

Gramya worked in close collaboration with Sarve Shiksha Abhiyaan to ensure non discriminatory access to quality education in public schools under RTE Act. In the same vein, it was actively engaged with the department and CBOs during the process of SMC formation. Gramya participated in the 129 SMC of primary schools as well as middle to promote the participation of excluded communities in SMC. Number of community leaders from Mahila Manch, Youth Groups was elected at SMC members in public schools. It resulted in minimizing caste based discrimination in schools and monitoring of quality services for MDM, improved WASH facilities, quality in teaching and fair distribution of scholarship etc.



Mahila Manch Debar the Forgery in PDS Shop

The empowered Mahila Manch of Nahwanipur Panchayat consisting of women from Harijan and Nut community saved the marginalized community from being deceived at PDS shop. Previously, they used to accept whatever quantity of ration was supplied to them by the PDS shopkeeper. They were not aware about their entitled rights under PDS scheme. The regular meetings / orientations of Mahila Manch made them aware about their entitled rights under various schemes.

Informed and empowered member of Mahila Manch decided to verify the quantity of Ration supplied to them. So on the day of ration distribution, the 10 members of Mahila Manch collectively went to PDS Shop and asked to give ration. First of all Manju Devi gave his ration card to the PDS shopkeeper and demanded for ration. Shopkeeper supplied her with the ration using his own weighing scale for measurement. But women refused to accept that saying that you have to use our weighing scale to validate the quantity. Shopkeeper refused to do that. Then Mahila Manch members said that if will not do so, we will complaint about it to the higher authorities. Recognizing the women's firm determination, the PDS shopkeeper nil down and accepted the women's demand. Use of the community's weighing scale revealed that the ration was about 2 kgs less then the quota entitled for them. Women warned him to debar such practices or they will demand to close down his shop.

School Chalo Abhiyaan

Under the School Chalo Abhiyaan, Gramya covered 51 primary schools and 9 middle schools from the 51 villages of Sevapuri and Baragaon block. During campaign the organization holder rallies and other village level activities in collaboration with the schools and Gram Panchayat to mobilize parents of out of school and drop out children to enroll them in schools.

SMC Initiative for Quality Education

Formation of SMCs in a democratic manner in the Gramya's project intervention area resulted in enhancing the participation of excluded communities in SMCs. It provided them the opportunities to present opinions and monitors the quality education in schools. SMCs were motivated and trained to support teachers and do not considered them as enemy. SMCs were mobilized to identify the gaps in facility in schools and to approach higher authorities to fulfill those gaps. Several examples were illustrated by SMCs where the quality of facilities and services were improved with the active engagement of SMCs.



Right to Livelihood & MGNREGA

Strengthening of CBOs for Employment Demand

Majdoor Kishan Manch is a collectivization of landless laborers and marginal farmers working as unskilled laborers for their survival needs. The village level CBO Majdoor Kishan Manch along with Mahila Manch members were made aware and mobilized to demand for the employment under MGNREGA. Women started demanding employment from Gram Pradhan and if not being heard at Panchayat level, they approached to block & district officials with their grievances and submitted their written applications for employment to them. Through the CBOs they learnt to struggle for their rights. It had resulted in raising the demands for employment under MGNREGA.

Campaign for Participatory Labour Budget

In Aug '2013, 10 days labour budget campaign was kicked off in 10 GPs included 7 GPs from Sevapuri and 3 GPs from Baragaon block from project area. The objective was to create a model of participatory labour budget under MGNREGA in which estimated labour budget was developed with the actual participation of the beneficiaries i.e. MGNREGA job cardholders. Even most of the PRIs are also not aware of the procedure of labour budget preparation and randomly plan some activities under the influence of the Panchayat Secretary and other influential persons in the village. When the Gramya launched the campaign, there was initial resistance from the Gram Panchayat. But when Gramya team oriented them about the importance of participatory planning of labour budget for the development of the Panchayat, they got agreed and supported in campaign.



Campaign for Demand Generation

To aware and mobilize excluded communities to come forward to demand for more and more employment under MGNREGA, organization outset a campaign in July'2014 called 'Kaam Maago Abhiyaan' in 14 GPs of project intervention area. As a result of this campaign, 284 job cards holders had submitted their demand application and got employment in their own village. A large number of the excluded community got aware about MGNREGA and were willing to apply for employment after rainy season.

Intensive Participatory Planning Exercise

PACS had organized the 3 days residential training on Intensive Participatory Planning Exercise (IPPE) under MGNREGA in Aug'2014. In this training, the four organizations including Gramya have participated with their CBO members. During the 3 days training, the facilitators oriented participants about the revised rules and regulations of MGNREGA. MGNREGA is failed to serve people's need due to lack of proper labour budget. The Gram Pradhans & Secretary of the Panchayats develops estimated budget without actually access the people's demand for employment and type of work for creating sustainable assets. The Participants were trained on the techniques of labour budget preparation. The training resulted in providing technical guidance for the preparation of participatory labour budget and the trained CBO leaders and Gramya team has in turn sensitized and trained PRIs and CBOs.



Innovative Approaches of Gramya

1. **Women lead CBOs Advocating for Rights** : Mahila Manch, women lead community organizations developed by Gramya is slightly different from that of mutual self help groups that are generally meant to promote small savings. Mahila Manch is a platform to empower women to stand for her nutritional and health rights more confidently. Mahila Manch helps women to enhance easy access to JSY and other maternal health benefits. Mahila Manch serves as 'Pressure Groups', demanding for non discrimination quality services at health facilities. Mahila Manch is helps to generate demands for services
2. **Cluster level Approach for Strengthening of Village based CBOs:** Village based CBOs like Mahila Manch, Majdoor Kishan Manch generates power and enthusiasm from the CBOs in the neighboring villages facing almost similar situations & difficulty. Although no formal federations has been developed yet, but clustering of villages helps in the strengthening of excluded communities collectives. It provides opportunities for mutual learning through participation in each others meetings, exposure visits and sharing of best practices.
3. **Hospital Exposure Visits:** Innovative strategy to organize hospital exposure visits, where Mahila Manch members were welcomed by Doctors and other hospital staff helps the women to overcome their fears of visiting health facilities. Open discussion with the doctors helps to address their queries on RSBY & other schemes and to develop faith in medical practitioners.
4. **RSBY Mitra:** RSBY Mitra is another innovative idea experiment under the project. RSBY Mitra is a community mobilizer from the project villages itself who motivates and guides the community about the benefits of enrollment under RSBY Schemes. It results in remarkable increase in number of RSBY Smart Cardholders.
5. **Magic Shows for Community Mobilization:** A magician performing shows at village level proved to be successful strategy to mobilize community at a common place. Magician delivered the key messages on RSBY schemes in an entertaining manner.
6. **Campaign for SMC Formation:** Instead of strengthening the already formed SMCs, the Gramya team took a lead to engage itself during the process of SMC formation. It resulted in the formation of more transparent, participatory and democratic SMC proving equal opportunities for representation of excluded communities.
7. **Campaign on Labour Budget:** A pilot campaign on labour budget preparation in 10 GPs was another innovation experimented by Gramya. It was an effort for development of more transparent and participatory budget focusing on the needs of the excluded communities.
8. **Social Audit on ICDS:** Excluded community women instead of pleading to get the benefits of ICDS services, participated in conducting its social audit to review the access of ICDS services to excluded communities in different hamlets. This not only resulted in promoting



accountability of ICDS worker but its finding were also shared with administrative authorizes for corrective actions at district level.

9. ***Quarterly Update on CBOs Buzz:*** 'Jan Pahal' a quarterly newsletter for sharing of struggle, achievements and challenges of CBOs is pioneering way to provide a platform to the excluded communities to demonstrate the power of collective struggle and to advocate for their entitled rights by sharing the field realities with government officers and policy makers in a more appealing manner.
10. ***Area Facilitators from within the Community:*** Gramya's Area Facilitators responsible for facilitating community mobilization activities at the ground level were selected from within the project villages itself, so that they are well versed with the local situation and can easily communicate the messages to the community in their local dialects.

Facilitating factors

1. ***Homogeneity of Target Groups:*** The homogeneity of target groups was the key facilitating factor supporting the project interventions at the village level. The target group comprises of excluded communities dominated by Schedule Caste and Muslim minorities. So it was easy to collectivize them on their common issues.
2. ***Issues Directly Linked with Women:*** Nutrition, Health and Livelihood are the issues which directly affects the women utmost. It was easy to mobilize women to form CBOs on these issues.
3. ***Cluster Easily Approachable:*** Cluster level approach helps to plan and implement strategies in accordance to the specific needs of the area. Also it promotes easy movement of CBO members within the cluster to learn and share from each other. Even a Area Facilitator can dedicate more quality time at the field level using this approach.
4. ***Natural Leadership:*** Natural leadership among the community members were identified and developed during the project intervention. Natural leaders when properly trained come in front in leadership roles for raising the voices of the community and demanding of their entitled rights.
5. ***Use of Popular Means of Communication:*** A large scale use of innovative and popular means of communications like puppets shows, street plays, film screening, reciting slogans and other audio visual means resulted in mass mobilization of the community demanding of rights and services.
6. ***Support from Senior Government Officials:*** Senior government officials at the district and block level extended all possible support the Gramya's intervention for promoting the better access to health, nutrition and livelihood schemes among excluded communities. This helps for develop accountability of front line workers and duty bearers at Panchayat level.

Challenges & Hindering factors

- ***Soaring Feudalistic Tendency:*** Feudalistic tendency is very soaring in Sevapuri and Baragaon block of Varanasi district which had hampered community mobilization at vast scale. Excluded communities terrorized to raise their voice against the will of the feudal lords in the Panchayat.
- ***Prevailing Discrimination:*** Prevailing caste based discrimination excludes the vulnerable poor to access their entitlements under various welfare schemes.
- ***Poor levels of Literacy:*** Poor level of literacy hinders to easily communicate message to the community. They were not aware about their rights. CBOs also find it difficult to keep record of its affairs as most of its members were poorly literate.
- ***Lack of Livelihood Security:*** Excluded community laborers were depended on big landlords and Gram Pradhan for their basic necessities due to lack of livelihood security to them. So they feared to raise their voices against them.
- ***Corruption by Service Providers:*** Corruption by front line service providers like ASHA, ANM and Para-Medical Staff at public health facilities is still a major challenge in the project intervention area. They demand for money in lieu of the free of cost services available under NRHM and other programs.
- ***Non Functionality of Panchayat Committees:*** Various committees of the Panchayat like SMC, Village Health and Sanitation Committee were not very functional and excluded communities had almost no say in such committees. Non-Functionality of such committees came out as a major challenge for Gramya during intervention.
- ***Insensitive Attitude of Service Provider & Gram Pradhan's:*** Insensitive attitude of service providers and Gram Pradhans' towards excluded communities was another hindering factor in accessing welfare services by excluded communities.
- ***Supply not matching with the Increasing Demands:*** Toilsome efforts were made to generate community's demand for their entitlements and services. But the supply of services doesn't increase proportionally to match the demands. It resulted in discouraging the community.

Project Learning

- **Community Led Approach:** Community led approach leads to sustainable development of excluded communities. Struggle for rights of the excluded communities to be lead by their own community leaders. It empowers them and promotes their collectivization to raise their voices for their entitled rights.
- **Learning by Doing:** Learning by doing things leads to innovations. Members of Mahila Manch were oriented about their entitlements under various schemes However, the Mahila Manch members drive out their own innovative ways to access their entitlements like intimidating the services providers to approach higher authorities in case of poor service delivery.
- **Sharing of Best Practices:** The best practices of one CBOs were shared with the other CBOs in the project areas. It had a motivational impact on other CBOs to take lead and compete with each other in healthy manner to bring rights for their communities.
- **Campaigns for Community mobilization:** Undertaking community mobilization activities in a campaign mode yield better results as it develops an environment to start a dialogue on the issue to generate communities demand and finding community based solutions to address common problems.
- **Work in Close Collaboration with FLWs and Gram Panchayat:** Front line Workers and Gram Panchayats have prominent role in promoting sustainable rural development. Therefore, it is important to work in close collaboration with them and to sensitize them to for the realization of special needs of the excluded communities. And simultaneously, the community needs to be oriented that they are not their enemies and CBOs should support them for improved service delivery.
- **Liaisoning & Networking:** Strong Liaisoning and networking with district administration & its line departments and the CSOs results in greater attainment of desired goals. It assists to fix the accountability of the service providers at different levels. It also helps to bring policy level reforms in favor of target groups. District CSO forums can act as pressure groups in the district advocating for the rights of the marginalized communities.

Future Plan of Action

In next 5 years, Gramya Sansthan looks forward to work more intensively on the thematic issues of Health & Nutrition, Education and Livelihood of the excluded communities. The goal is to empower the strong networks of the excluded communities advocating for their rights. Self sustainable of excluded communities will be promoted by enhancing their access to improved health and nutrition services, non discriminatory quality education and demand generation for employment and creation of sustainable assets under MGNREGA. CBOs need to be at the forefront to struggle for their rights. Community leaders needs to be capacitated to take lead to mobilize community for generating more and more demands for non discriminatory access to quality services and facilities on the principles of equity and equality. For realizing the dream for a better world for excluded communities, the Gramya's strategic plan of action in future can be jotted down as follows:

Development of Women Federations

Development of cluster, block and district level strong federations of women based community organizations 'Mahila Manch' that is committed to protection of rights and development of socially excluded communities through the promotion of community based institution, decent livelihood, education, food and nutrition security, access to improved nutrition & health facility and services and most importantly through the empowerment of women. During last 4 years, informal village based women CBOs were formed and trained to know and demand for their entitled rights. These CBOs also participates in the monthly meetings of CBOs in their own cluster. But this was just a step ahead towards a development of federations and lot more needs to be done. Federations needs to be formally organized, trained and empowered enough to take up issues strongly to achieve the desired goals.

Strengthening of MGNREGA Labour Unions

Gramya initiated for informal collectivization of MGNREGA labourers as Majdoor Kishan Manch. MGNREGA labourers and marginal farmers at the village level were motivated to come together to demand for employment from their Gram Pradhan under MGNREGA schemes. But availability of employment is not the only issue under MGNREGA. There are several other issues like time of site facilities, discrimination etc are widely prevalent. Formation and strengthening of MGNREGA labour unions at block and district level can work as pressure groups to bring administrative and policy level reforms to ensure sustainable livelihood generation at Panchayat level.

Strengthening of Community Monitoring Mechanism

Rights of excluded communities are protected and persevered under various welfare schemes of the government. However, there are several implementation loopholes which impinge on their access to the most vulnerable communities. Programs like ICDS, MDM, PDS, VHND etc fails to serve the health and nutrition needs of the community in the absence of proper monitoring mechanism at Panchayat level. Therefore Gramya will continue to work for development and strengthening of community monitoring mechanism in its project intervention areas in future. CBOs will be mobilized to develop

their own innovative tools of community monitoring to enhance the quality of service deliveries by institutions and facilities at Panchayat level. Along with it CBO federations will be developed at block and district level to monitor service deliveries under various welfare programs at block and district level. This will help to promote transparency and accountability of the duty bearers and service providers at Panchayat, block and district level.

Representation of Excluded Communities in Government Committees

To surmount the discrimination of excluded communities and to provide them with the equal opportunities to develop, it is critically important that they should have fair representation not only in the Panchayat level committees like SMCs, VWSC etc but also in block and district level committees like district health committee, district education committee etc. Gramya believes that there is immense need and potential to develop leadership skills among excluded communities and to aware them about the rights of the socially excluded communities, so that they can represent the voices of the communities at larger platforms. Also advocacy efforts are required for policy level change to enhance the opportunities for the excluded communities for their fair representation in various constitutional committees at Panchayat, Block and District level.

ABOUT GRAMYA SANSTHAN

GRAMYA SANSTHAN is a not for profit, Non governmental, Non-political Organisation registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 with its registered office at Varanasi. Gramya is also registered under FCRA, 1976 and 12AA of Income Tax Act. Registered in the year 1992, Gramya started its working in the most backward, isolated and tribal populated block Naugarh (formerly a block of Varanasi district) in the district of Chandauli.

With a vision to develop equitable and non exploitative society, Gramya is working for the upliftment of the marginalized and socially excluded communities since last 23 years.

Gramya Sansthan is a female-headed organization and ensures equal representation of women at all levels. We are primarily concerned with women issues and denounce all sorts of violence against the women. We raise voice against the violation of their rights, gender based discrimination and fights for gender equality and justice.

Gramya Sansthan believes in the inherent talents of the rural folk and synergizing their potentials for overcoming to their problems. Over a period of time, collectivization and empowerment of women is the key prima facie of Gramya's intervention. There are different community based organizations that are now emerging as voice of change, creating awareness and taking initiatives on their local issues and for their entitlements.

We are working in partnership with reputed funder/donor agencies on different projects and we have a good working force of development professionals within the organization and team members equipped with profound grass root experiences and technical knowledge on different thematic issues.

Gramya is also leading organization in U.P. having membership in some bigger networks/forums formed on issue based at the state level namely AALI, DAG, WHRAP, SAHYOG.

Maintaining good relation with the people we are working with, making dedicated efforts until the desired objectives are achieved, fighting against all sort of injustice on any ground towards the target beneficiaries, empowering poor & marginalized people in decision making and enabling them to have access of the govt. welfare schemes and other facilities under the provisions they are entitled for is carried out.

Gramya with its strong rural entity in different working districts of U.P. i.e. Chandauli, Sonebhadra, Varanasi and Allahabad and due to our demonstrable works for the target communities, govt. functionaries also recognize & collaborate in development process.

Gramya Sansthan

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