

1. Project : Ensuring Women's Access to Land and Livelihood Schemes

The project, under the NES-India activities within the fold of ILC, has two fold objectives :
One, to organize training sessions and interaction to gain access to government and other land and livelihood schemes & programmes, especially for women.
Two, to carry out advocacy towards more effective implementation of existing policies of the Government.

Altogether 4 villages, under 2 Panchayats areas in 2 districts (East Singhbhum & West Singhbhum District) in the state of Jharkhand in India have been covered. The beneficiary coverage is women of 243 families directly and with an indirect effect on women of another 400 families – all belonging to SC/ST/OBC and other marginalized sections of the society.

1. Organising Village Women's Groups

Through this project 4 Women Farmer's Groups formed with a membership count at 243 women members. The outcome can be traced as:

- A social recognition for the women as farmers for the first time.
- An organised structure as a women farmer's group for the first time.
- A very active exchange of information has resulted in many women availing of schemes like Agro Credit Card.
- Many women are now venturing into women-centered, food & nutrition based agro practices like Kitchen Garden.

2. Women's Meets

To augment the process 20 Meets were organised with an average participation of 50 women farmers. In these meets the following were discussed:

- Theme-based discussion on Land Laws, Land and Livelihood, Protection of Land Resources, Women's Contribution to Agriculture etc.
- Interactive discussion including group discussions and group presentations.
- Usage of assorted communication tools ranging from Flash Cards, Discussion Booklets, Posters and Cartoon Booklets.
- Emphasis on usage of visual medium to reach out to the illiterate women farmers, including cultural elements like group songs, play read-outs etc.
- Focus on local land issues as a part of the discussions.
- Encouraged Women Farmers to conduct the meets and take active role.

. Leadership Building On Socio-Legal Issues:

To build grass-root level leadership on socio-legal issues related to land and livelihood 3 Leadership Development Training Programmes were organised : While during the previous reporting period a training programme was held from 21st – 23rd March 2014 at Jamshedpur, this year the second one was held at Ghatsila from 10th to 11th July 2014 and the other one was held in Kolkata from 14th to 16th August 2014.

4. Land & Livelihood Fair

This activity was organised to build public awareness about the livelihood opportunities offered by Land and Natural Resources and to emphasise on the land rights of women. The 3-day event was jointly held from 19 September, 2014 at Ghatsila. A widespread sensitization on the different livelihood opportunities based on land and natural resources could be created

2. Project: Purulia Women and Children Development

The Purulia Women and Children Development project, initiated in the tribal district of Purulia with the financial support provided by European Patent Office –Third World Association, Germany concluded with this financial year.

The project has been successful in bringing positive changes in the lives of women towards empowerment, and augmented improvement of the condition of children of the region. At the end of the project period, an over-view study was carried out in the areas. We are happy to share with you some of the relevant findings of this study :

1. Women's Empowerment:

1.1. Women as a group:

The members of these women's committees have also actively taken part in the different local level governance meets to express their views. They have also encouraged other women to participate in such meets.

1.2. Access to Government Schemes:

Though there are many schemes by the government, not many of these schemes actually reach the people due to lack of awareness, especially among the women. Through regular awareness generation events, women have been able to get knowledge about the different government schemes and programmes. They are now availing schemes like Indira Awas Yojana (Housing schemes for poor women), Old-Age pension, Agriculture Credit Card etc. They are also taking special interest to ensure that they have special cards issued by the government called Below Poverty Line or BPL cards. This has not only helped the women in being economically empowered but has also ensured improved social status.

1.3. Improved economic condition through Savings:

The discussion at the women's meets and special efforts by the animators have ensured that women have opted for different savings programmes to enhance their living conditions. 265 women now have Savings Accounts in the Banks - as a Self Help Group or as an individual. The propensity to save has definitely increased remarkably. Along with these 100 families have applied for a special savings scheme recently introduced by the government. This tendency to save has resulted in the overall improvement in the economic conditions of the women.

1.4. Environment-friendly Agricultural Practices:

The women are now insisting on using organic manure like cow dung, hay, rotten leaves and vegetable peels etc. There are about 55 women who are regularly practising local seed preservation – in this way not only are they helping their own families but are also helping in seed exchange processes. This has also helped economically since the propensity to buy costly hybrid seeds have reduced. Indigenously prepared organic manures too are proving to be beneficial for the women. Women have now begun to believe that environment-friendly agricultural practices would not only help them economically but would be beneficial for the life and longevity of their agricultural lands as well. On the other hand the environment would also be protected.

1.5. Building Knowledge:

Many women have learnt to sign their own names for the first time, thus equipping themselves with a strong tool to be empowered – now they would be able to sign their names in bank accounts and in legal documents too. This apart the women have also learnt to check body temperature using a thermometer; they have learnt how to tell the time looking at the clock; they now understand the importance of having a regular Blood Pressure monitoring etc.

1.6. Health and Nutrition Awareness:

Health Check-up camps were held every six months to monitor the growth of the children and to detect any underlying nutrition deficiency problems. These camps also demonstrated the women how to measure thermometer. They can now understand that if the silver-line crosses a certain mark then the person has fever and it needs to be attended immediately. Not just this, the women were also made aware on the need for vaccination of pregnant women and infants. As a result many women ensured that the pregnant women and infants of their families received vaccination on time.

The efforts to promote nutritional life-style has ensured that most women now cook by covering their cooking pot. They also wash the vegetables before cutting them, thereby preserving the nutrients and vitamins. Low-cost nutritional health food alternatives like "Nutrimix" were prepared in front of the women and they were trained in the process to use low cost, indigenous ingredients to prepare "Nutrimix" that is beneficial both for the women and the children.

1.7. Care for the Animal Resources :

Animal husbandry camps were held where the animals were checked, treated and given vaccination. Around 250 cows were vaccinated with vaccine as prevention for FMD. Vaccines were given to more than 600 chickens. Also treatments were given to pigs, goats and ducks. At each of the camps basic medical treatment of animals and preventive care etc were taught to those present.

Four special Animal Health Care trainings were organized to teach the young women the basics of animal health care.

1.8. Improved Income-Generation:

This project gave women different avenues and possibilities to generate income for themselves. Two Village Markets, commonly known as Village *Haats* were introduced in the area and were helpful in providing women a platform to sell the home-grown vegetables and home-made items.

The training on making ropes from *Baboi* (a type of long grass grow in the forest abundantly) have helped to strengthen local women's group since there is a huge demand for Baboi Ropes. The wide variety of trainings and support, from making Saal leaf plates and bowls to learning wax-based craft like Batik, have ensured that women use their skills to the maximum.

1.9.Promotion of Kitchen Gardens:

A small plot adjoining to the kitchen, which is available in every household, was encouraged to be developed into a kitchen garden. Seeds of highly nutritious but easy to grow vegetables were provided among the women. Using the spare water from their kitchen the women grew okra, green chillies, tomato, brinjals, pumpkin, red and green spinach.

3. Women's Empowerment

This programme, taken up with the funding support from Mamacash, have been very crucial for Swadhina because it has been a period when we have intensified the thrust on the rights of women on her basic needs – whether it is to do with her right over her food, her rights over property or her rights over the different government programmes and schemes.

First three months had been on reaffirming the ground level realities through participatory studies and survey, followed by intense capacity building programmes for the grass-root women through leadership trainings and intensifying awareness-building at the grass-root level through village level meets.

The next phase was action-based awareness building:

-Conducted ground level study and survey of the areas among 200 number of families.

-Conducted 12 number of village level Public meets with an average participation of 45 participants.

-Conducted 3 residential Leadership Trainings, each of 3 days duration with an average participation of 33 participants in each.

-Conducted a two day Advocacy Meet with a total of 59 participants.

-Generated awareness among nearly 1200 persons through usage of 6 types of posters, 4 types of booklets and 3 sets of Flash Cards.

Effect of Leadership Camps: The leadership trainings have been effective in two special ways: one, in developing knowledge related to right over land, property and government schemes and two, in bringing out effective leadership qualities in women. For example, it is never a norm to give knowledge to women about land like purchase of new land, land registration, use of land, location of land, quantum of land owned by the family etc. This practice was broken during the trainings where the women were trained about land, land registration and were also taught how to do participatory mapping. It was interesting to see how the women had gone back to their respective villages and had involved themselves in active resource mapping. Many of the women who were part of the capacity building process have emerged as successful village leaders.

Project: Towards a Clean Green Tomorrow

The above project was undertaken by Swadhina under a project Grant from Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change –EE Division (vide Project: File No 15-10/2014-EE). The project period was July 2014 to March 2015. Here is a full report of the project. We record our sincere gratitude to the concerned ministry for entrusting the project to us.

1. Womens Environment Awareness Meet:

These are termed as Hariyali Meet, which aimed at creating awareness that unless we take care of our environment , including the trees, plants and make our living environment friendly, soon we will be devoid of all our green around us, and the world will become a large desert. During the period of the project a good number of such awareness meets were conducted:

2. Childrens' Rural-Eco Groups

This programme aimed at involving children in environment care activities so that they learn to be sensitive to the issues from an very early age. The activities ranged from taking out rallies on Swachhata in the villages where they live and also learn about environment care through poster, wall writing and walk-around the village with placards on environment etc. During the period the following were accomplished:

3. Eco Exposure: Prakriti Safar

This programme aimed at organising exposure tour for children who could gain first hand knowledge about environment sustenance by visiting plantation, garden, forest situation etc. Along with this they will also learn about various trees, birds etc. During the project period two such Eco-Exposure were held.

3.1. Eco- Exposure – Jharkhand at Purulia Bhalo Pahar, Purulia

On March 6, 2015 with 20 children Swadhina senior field worker Monoranjan Bairagi, Judhisthir Mahato and Jagadhatri Mahato went for a eco tour. *Bhalo Pahar* is situated at Bandawan town of Purulia District of West Bengal. A tour bus was arranged to take all the participants to Bhalo Pahar. The eco exposure tour started at 6 am. Bhalo is a forest area developed by the local bodies. The children participated in the plantation of the trees festival. There was an interactive session with one of the forest officials named Kamal Chakroborty .At the end of the tour students received food packet. They returned home with song on environment on their lips.

3.2. Eco- Exposure – Jharkhand at K.C Pur Dam & Lalokot Eco Garden

An Eco Exposure tour was organized by Swadhina on 12th March 2015 with a group of children. The main purpose of such eco exposure is that to enhance children's knowledge about the environment around them. To participate in this tour students from primary school of villages Gurudabasa and Bhurudbani of Mayurbhanj district Orissa was present. Overall 20 school student 10 from each village along with two teacher took part in this eco excursion. From behalf of Swadhina,

4. Caring The Plants : Mamta-se-Palo

This programme aimed at encouraging women in planting saplings and thereafter they taken care of the plants and also seeing this act the entire family as well as neighbourhood will be encouraged in plantation activities. During the programme women were give seeds of various vegetables so that they can start kitchen-garden near their household so that this serves dual purpose of environment sustenance as well as nutrition supplement for the family. Following is a short report on the programme:

5. Eco-Fest : Earth Fair – Vasundhara Mela

This programme aimed at organising a Vasundhara Mela wherein a simple exposition can be held for rural as well as urban folks on the environment friendly life-style and living and also to demonstrate various livelihood option that can be initiated with things available from our own environment. This programme was held with the Swadhina's own funding resources as a joint venture. Following is a short report on the event.

Earth Fair – Vasundhara Mela :

Swadhina has hoisted a two- days earth festival (*Vasudhara Mela*) on 19th and 21st September 2014 at the courtyard of Hotel Sivam Ghatsila Jharkhand. A row of stalls and a pandal was erected at the spacious lawn of the Shivam hotel, a prime location of Ghatsila town, on college road. A good number of people visited the stalls inspite of some occsional showers.

5. Environment Training:

This programme aimed at training key persons on the various aspects of environment sustenance and protection. There were two programmes which was residential in nature and the subjects included aspects like:

5.1. Environment Training – 1 Kolkata 15-17 August, 2014

The programme “Towards a Clean Green Tomorrow” was formally inaugurated by Sri Tridib Reeves. The programme began with a group song on environment by the Swadhina-Kolkata team.

5.3. Environment Training – 3 Ghatsila.

From 10.2.2015 to 11.2.2015 Swadhina organized this training at Dharmashala Ghatsila Jharkhnad.

Mukhiya of Gopalpur panchyat Mrs Rita Munda also spoke about importance of kitchen garden. She suggested that along with the planting of vegetable we can also plant some medicinal plant like Tulsi and calndula . Tulsi is very effective for cold and fever .Calendula helps to relief from headache. 13 rural women present there had received seeds. The program ended with Swadhina song “*Manush to ekdin Jagbai*”. 50 participants attended.

5.4: Environment Training – 4 Betnoti.

From 25.03.15 at Betnoti village the fourth Environment Training was held. The women participants came from all the 4 project area of Mayurbhanj District Orrissa. 30 women participated in this village meet. From Kolkata Swadhina office Diptendu Mukherji, Smriti Sarkar, Supta Mukherji , Monoranjan Bairagi and Manju Bairagi attended this meeting.

Participation:

Earth Day: A very educative session on nature and environment was held celebrating the Earth Day. This was organised at the Indian Museum at Kolkata. The event was held from 10 a.m. on 22nd April, 2014. It was a creative way of celebrating the day – a large paper-made Globe was kept in the middle of the centre court of the Museum. There were a large number of special children who were pasting various coloured paper on the globe symbolizing different countries, indicating that we are all One. There was also a live demonstration on making of terracotta, in which the children

were participating enthusiastically. Ms. Smriti Sarkar and Ms. Dipanwita Pal represented Swadhina at the meet.

Nari Nirjatan Protirodh Mancha (Organisation against violence on women), a women's rights organisation of Kolkata, held a rally at the Sujata Sadan Auditorium in Kolkata on 22nd April, 2014 from 4 p.m. A large number of women's organizations participated. Prof. Elina Sen presided over and delivered the keynote address. On behalf of Swadhina, Ms. Smriti Sarkar and Ms. Dipanwita Pal attended the meet.

Seminar on Gender: A seminar on Gender and violence on women was organised by SERVE. This was held in Kolkata. Ms. D. Pal represented Swadhina at the the meet held on 24 April, 2014.

Art Exhibition: As the part of a fund raising effort, Goodwill Mission – a prime voluntary organizations of Kolkata organised an Art Exhibition at the Calcutta Rowing Club on April 29, 2015. There was a good gathering. Swadhina was represented by D Pal and S Sarkar.

Handicraft Exhibition: *Ankur Kala* a women's organisation of Kolkata held its two- day Annual Sale and Exhibition of handcrafts from 5 September 2014. Several women's organizations had put up their stall. Swadhina's stall exhibited batik and stitch craft prepared by the rural women of field area.

MNBEI Anniversary: 75th Anniversary of Majhihira National Basic Education Institution a premier Gandhian organisation of the country held this event in their campus from 12 September, 2014. Swadhina is associated with this organisation since Swadhina's inception. There were various events commemorating this Anniversary like discussion sessions on social issues, cultural function, children's rally, exhibition etc. Swadhina team representing at this function included Jagadhatri, Manoranjan, Prithwiraj and Judhistir.

ILC Workshop: Ms. Saswati Roy and Sri Pradip Gope represented at this two-day workshop held at Ahmedabad from October 4, 2014. This was a gathering of good number of ILC affiliated organizations which discussed on the land issues.