

SANSADHINI

towards strengthening resource base for women across

Sathi Fellow's Mid Term Progress Report

June 2007-August 2007

About the fellowship:

Sathi All for Partnerships believes in building partnership of different stakeholders and work in solidarity to develop a locally articulate **ESC rights culture**. Ensuring the rights of the marginalized section of the society thus remains an area of priority for us.

With the aim of providing a support base for the grassroot organizations and activists to work in the sphere of Women and Resource rights, Sathi started a fellowship programme in 2006. In the first phase of the programme three fellows from Jharkhand, Delhi and Uttarakhand were provided a support of Rs.5000 for a period on three months to work on Tribal women, Urban Women and Muslim Women respectively. This period was significant in terms of concept building and agenda setting in local context. Apart from financial assistance the fellowship also provides resource base/ Orientation/training and various opportunities of exchange and exposure to these fellows.

In continuation to this Sathi announced its second round of Fellowship programme-Sansadhini in April 2007. From amongst five applications three fellows were finally selected for extending support on the basis of their experience and proposed intervention in a period of Six months. Due to financial constrains we had to cut down the support for these fellows to Rs.3500. The four basis components of this fellowship programme are:

- 1) Awareness Generation
- 2) Capacity Building
- 3) Local Agenda setting
- 4) Cross Learning

About the fellows:

Three fellows were selected for support on the basis of their CV's and work plan for six month. The fellows selected and their thematic area of work is as follows:

Naazma (Uttaranchal) :**Thematic Area:** Muslim women and resource rights

Working in two villages-Dhakrani and Dalipur of Vikasnagar block in Uttaranchal, Naazma has been actively involved in community work for the past ten years. She has an experience of working on the issue of women and violence and women land rights thorough working for Disha Samajik Sanstha.

Priyasheela Besra (Jharkhand) :**Thematic area:** Tribal women and resource rights

Work experience of 12 years in the field of women organizing, Priyasheela is the Secretary of Saheli Adhyayan Kendra which has co-steered the tribal women land rights initiative of CWLR and have played a major role in the formation of GLRF, the regional forum on the issue.

Panch Phula Rao (Maharashtra) :**Thematic Area:** Dalit women and resource rights

Has been working amongst Dalit women in the Nanded district of Marathwada region in Maharashtra, since last 15 years. She has an experience of working on issues like poverty, illiteracy, Employment Guarentee Programme, and dalit women's land rights. Panchfulas is the Prseident of 'Jan Jagruti Mandal' a community based NGO in Nanded.

Fellow's process report:**Naazma****Objective:**

- 1) Awareness building among rural women on Land and Resource Rights
- 2) Strategize ways towards strengthening the resource base at local level

Key Activities:

- 1) Door-to-door campaign (Sampark Abhiyaan) to mobilize women for participating in group discussion
- 2) Small group meetings in Dhakrani and Dalipur: About 20-25 women in six meetings have participated in this discussion related to rights on land, water and other resources
- 3) Meetings with Patwari and Pradhan to discuss the matters related to land transfers in women's name.

- 4) Organized a village level meeting which sought the presence of Local media persons.
- 5) Participated in a Workshop on Leadership development and capacity building of Muslim women for owning and managing resources.
- 6) Photographic documentation of the process.

Outcomes:

- 1) Due visibility to the issue of Women and Land at Local level. Also covered by Media (*Dainik Jagran and Amar Ujala*)
- 2) Local women have developed the confidence of approaching the Patwari and Pradhan and also reach out at Tahseel level on issues related to land and resources.
- 3) Got land in name of one women-Surmi Devi who was allotted entitlement 16 years back but had no access and control over the land.

Experiences and Learning:

- 1) It was difficult to seek the involvement and support of village Pradhan and Patwari in the process. It took several rounds of efforts to bring them to one such meeting where women posed several questions regarding the distribution and utilization of Gram Sabha land. It is very important to have a small consultative process with them prior to questioning their accountability in a large crowd.
- 2) The response of the local women was more overwhelming than expected. They supported the fellows throughout the period and attended the meetings.
- 3) Some women initially mistook her as government representatives and had too many expectations. It was difficult to clarify our position and mobilize them for participating without and short term specific gain. It was realized that these women somehow have developed a dependency mode where they expect things to change by themselves or with direct aid. It is therefore a big challenge to get them out of this mode and invpke them towards call for direct action at grassroot level.
- 4) The lucknow workshop provided a good opportunity to interact with women from different states and understand the issue in their context. It was a time when Muslim women across the nation discussed issue related to livelihood and sustenance.

Strategizing way ahead:

- 1) Lobby and Advocacy on Tehseel Diwas (*a day when SDM, Pradhan and other authority sit together to settle public issues*) for settling some of the pending cases of local women related to land on the spot.
- 2) Create legal awareness on women and resource rights among Samiti Women
- 3) Resource mapping exercise in one of the villages.

Panchfula Birajdar:

Objectives:

- 1) Strengthen the claim of landless Dalit women on Land and other resources
- 2) supporting collective farming of women of Ambulaga village by mobilizing inputs to increase economic viability
- 3) Documenting the Ambulaga initiative as a case study with all the necessary details

Activities:

- 1) Organized five local meeting for awareness generation and information sharing on Dalit women and land rights in the village.
- 2) Organized March of local women along with other NGO's Tehsil office and submitted specific demands on distribution of land entitlement to women specifically.
- 3) Organized meeting for awareness generation and information sharing on Dalit women and land and resource rights in with five SHG groups.
- 4) Attended a workshop on Dalit women and Resource Rights in Jaunpur (Uttar Pradesh) as a resource person. Trained local women on resource mapping.
- 5) Survey on 67 household of the village to attain information on ownership and control of Land (*Land owned/ How much/ in whose name/ has been a court case etc*)
- 6) Organized a local training towards understanding the basis of Revenue Land records in the village. Almost 100 people participated in the training.

Outcomes:

- 1) Data collected on access and control of land – will be used for lobby and advocacy work ahead.
- 2) Attained village Map form the Patwari- created support group wih local women to carry the process ahead.
- 3) Approximately 10-12 percent of the people trained in the local training have developed the confidence of approaching revenue officials at Tehsil/District level independently

Leanings and experiences:

- 1) Went to Jaunpur as a trainer on Dalit women and land rights. It was the first opportunity to participate as an independent resource person. It instilled confidence in her to take up similar responsibilities in future.
- 2) It was a different kind of experience to see dalit women and land in the context of different state. It was observed that women in that area suffer violence, atrocities and violation of rights much more than the women of Marathwada. One of the reasons for this gap is that Marathwada women are more aware about their rights.

- 3) The experience of working with the local government authorities had been encouraging. These officials in past have supported even of a single women approached them with some request.

Strategizing way ahead:

- 1) Resource mapping exercise has been initiated. will be carried forward
- 2) Meetings and training on collective farming to be organized.
- 3) Documentation process of experiences from collective farming needs to be done

Priyasheela Besra

Objective:

- 1) To make an understanding and build strategy for working on Law, Customs and Tribal society
- 2) To make an understanding of the problems faced by tribal women in urban areas and devise strategy
- 3) Develop strategize for implementation of WRRRA in the context of Tribal women at local level.

Key Activities:

- 1) Participated in the events like Women and Land Rights Capacity Building Program organized by ActionAid in Koraput, Orissa, Livelihood workshop organized in Ambadiha panchayat (Mandro Block, Sahebganj). Dalit Women's Conference organized by Tamil Nadu Women's Forum and SRED at Arakkonam, near Chennai and North-east Tribal Women's conference in Itanagar.
- 2) Organized focused group discussions on the issue of customary practices, mostly related to tribal women, their marriage, family, separation and property rights in case of widow, single or deserted women.
- 3) Contributed in planning a campaign proposal for tribal women and land rights for Action Aid
- 4) Organized GLRF (Gender Livelihood and Resource Forum's) partners meet where the issue Tribal women in urban areas was introduced and discussed at length.
- 5) Organized local meetings with community women for a consultative process on taking a local strategy ahead on WRRRA.

Outcomes:

- 1) Trained group of three people to carry out the resource mapping work ahead.
- 2) Issues of migrant women highlighted in the context of tribal women, linkages with urban work for a viable solution.

- 3) Raised resources for campaign on tribal women and land rights from Action Aid.

Learning's and Experiences:

- 1) The situation of Tribal women working in Urban areas or aspire to work in urban areas is bad due to lack of proper enrouting, orientation with urban lifestyle and any kind of support from community once they are back. There is a need to workout a shelter or some support centers for these women.
- 2) The tribal society rarely tries to move the court, relying more on decisions by the tribal leadership / panchayat Imbibed with basis patriarchal values the verdict of these sources are usually not in favor of women.

Strategizing way ahead:

- 1) **Legal Intervention:** Mass level awareness campaign is required to educate the community about the new laws, amongst the tribal society and gender sensitization will be carried will be carried amongst the lawyers.
- 2) Follow-up with the GLRF partners on Urban meeting and drafting the work plan ahead
- 3) Resource Mapping in Sahebganj with the community support.
- 4) Discussion and ground work for establishing worker information centers across various regions of Jharkhand

Comment:

The fellows planned and targeted the work on women and resource rights at local level in their individual capacity initially. Later, with the support of their organizations in the process this work got new pace and momentum. This is the reason why these fellows feel that so far they were able to perform and achieve much more than they had ever expected in the beginning of the process. For Sathi this phase has been significant from the perspective that these fellows were able to get the agenda on board in their organization and drew their support in the fellowship work. Therefore we would like to share the credit and achievements made during this period with the related organization ie Disha Samajik Sansthan (Uttarakhand), Gender Livelihoods and Resource Forum (Jharkhand) and Paryay (Maharashtra).

There is a marked difference in the approaches followed by the fellows due to the differences in their regional context. Where Nazama and Panchfula have already initiated the process of local resource mapping by acquiring the village map which is the first step of WRRRA, Priyasheela has invested this time in attending more workshops and trainings for capacity building in resource mapping. Other difference being that where two fellows have invested time in approaching local government representatives (Patwari's/Pradhan) and officials at Tehsil/District Level the other fellow spend more time on community consultations and focused group discussion to develop a consensus on the way the issue

needs to be taken forwards, probably due to absence of implementation of PRI Act and discrepancies in handling and management of land records by local authorities.

One common link that is visible in the work of all the three fellows is that due to their consistent efforts in organizing group meetings and training programmes at local level there is comparatively more awareness in the community women related to their land and resource rights. The work of these fellows has contributed in developing a cadre of community women who have the confidence of independently taking their demands to the authorities and demand their rights.