

Annual Report of Astha Sansthan

2006-2007

Introduction

Astha was formed in 1986, and over the years, it has evolved from work in one Block of one District (Kotra Block of Udaipur District), to work in much of South Rajasthan, issue-based work in other parts of Rajasthan, and network issue based work with others all over India, and in South Asia.

Astha is a Hindi word meaning “**deep faith of conviction**” and Astha has “faith in the People”. We believe that everyone the poor, exploited, deprived, have strength and abilities that often they themselves don’t recognize. Society also speaks disparagingly of the poor. However, we also believe that unorganized, the poor are not able to change their condition -- organized, amazing things are possible; Along with this, is an understanding that “knowledge is power”, and so the strategy of Astha includes training programmes, study tours so people can learn from others, analysis of social reality, meetings to understand inter-relationships and social forces.

Some of the other Principles that guide Astha’s work are:

- The poor can identify and prioritize their issues and problems.
- Local and grassroots level work is affected by state and national policies; People’s Organizations and groups must have an understanding of the effect of micro and macro level realities, and work to change those too, when needed.
- The role of the NGO is not “to parallel the government “ – the government should run schools and health facilities, etc, and one of the roles of the NGO to help People to access the government resources.
- Women’s participation in development and change activities is necessary, and unless a special effort is made to include women, women’s participation will be negligible.
- Learn with the people in one place, and then, when some strategy has been worked out that helps to solve some problems, then with the leaders who have come up in process, go to other places where people face similar problems, and in this way, issue-wise and with the people, expand the work.

Astha Strategy

Field Work - the Base

The Astha Team knew that a “ bottom up” strategy meant doing a solid piece of fieldwork, and getting involved with the lives of people. We selected the major portion of one Block of Udaipur district and began the work of organizing and training and empowerment of the people.

The fieldwork strategy has evolved to one, which helps people to become organized, and aware to work on the problems they face, through a combined strategy of struggle and constructive action.

Struggle alone will not bring about a new social order, but without struggle fundamental social change is not possible, and constructive action alone will not bring about a new social order, but alternatives and changes in material and service conditions is a necessary part of social change.

Organization Training/Awareness

Struggle + Constructive Action

The main focus of the work of Astha over the previous 20 years has been to build up organizations, big and small of the poor, and help them to develop the leadership to work on the problems they face. Village groups, city based groups, issue based groups, area wide groups, registered groups unregistered groups, Men's, women's and mixed groups.

1. People's Organization work.
2. Issued Based Resource units.
3. Government /Semi Government project work (strengthen primary education, Soil and water conservation work, Voter education).
4. Responsive work to change the negative effects of social environmental economic conditions in the country. Work on communal harmony, drought relief, against the harmful effects on the poor of the globalized economic policies.

In order to further the mission and to achieve the goals Astha has established 7 Resource and Support Units and 8 People's Organizations. These 8 People's Organizations have independent identities, working in various parts of Rajasthan. The concentration remains South Rajasthan but some of the work extends beyond.

Astha receives support from international and national organizations to fulfill the ambitions of poor people.

Resource Units:

- The Local Self Governance Resource Unit
- The Livelihood Resource Unit
- The Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre
- People's Education and Culture Resource Unit
- The Globalization Resource Unit
- Current Issues
- The Peoples' Organizations Support Society Resource Unit

Peoples Organizations (POs):

- Adivasi Vikas Manch (Tribal Development Forum)
- Adivasi Mahila Jagriti Samiti (Tribal Women's Awareness Society)
- Rajsmand Mahila Manch (Rajsamand Women's Forum)
- Jagra Vikas Samiti (Jarga Development Society)
- Vagad Mazdoor Kisan Sangthan (Vagad Labourers and Farmers Organization)
- Gorward Adivasi Sangathan (Gorward Tribal Organization)

- Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan (The Association of Strong Women Alone)
- Samarthak Samiti (The Support Society)

Projects :

Astha also takes up a limited number of selected projects with the government. In this year, Astha, with 2 People's Organizations, worked on the UNDP supported project, "Social Mobilization and Natural Resource Management".

Support Units :

The Udaipur office also provides services – the Administrative Unit, the Documentation Centre and the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Support Unit provide help to all the Resource Units and POs. The Training Centres of Astha provide support to all the Units and POs, and to other institutions working with the poor. A Literacy Team strengthens leadership through crash, condensed, residential training programmes.

Networking :

Astha networks with a number of NGOs working in Rajasthan and in India for issue-based advocacy related to poor people. This year the Right to Information Act has attained the status of a law as a result of a long struggle by people in Rajasthan, and in the country. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has also become law in 2005, and is being implemented since February 2006. Astha enabled several NGOs and People's Organizations to work together to raise awareness for effective implementation of the Act in their respective working areas. The networking has provided an impetus to the pro-poor issues and influenced the state and national policies.

This report will elaborate on the progress made by the Resource Units, Support Units, and People's Organizations during the past year.

Resource Units

1. The Local Self Governance Resource Unit
2. The Livelihood Resource Unit
3. The Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre
4. People's Education and Culture Resource Unit
5. The Globalization Resource Unit
6. Current Issues
7. The Peoples' Organizations Support Society Resource Unit

THE LOCAL SELF GOVERNANCE UNIT

The Local Self Governance Unit was created to strengthen democracy, from the bottom up. In order to empower people to be able to make plans for their own development and have control over the local resources, work with people to take part in their *Gram Sabha* meetings (Village Assemblies) and monitor the Gram Panchayat (Village Council) has been a central part of the work of the Unit. The people participate in Governance and fulfill their role of "citizens". Also, in order to increase participation and knowledge of women in the PRI's, Astha strengthens the capacity of the women elected representatives, and brings awareness about the role of local self-government structures and their responsibilities. The Unit also does some work in relation to Tribal Self Rule, making communities and officials aware of the PESA Act (Panchayats {Extension to the Scheduled Areas} Act) in V Schedule tribal areas.

Objectives:

1. To strengthen the process of Local Self Governance in Rajasthan; to promote supportive structures for effective implementation of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) along with activities of awareness generation and sensitization.
2. To enhance adivasi people's understanding about politics and to make efforts to preserve their social arrangements and their traditions.
3. To improve participation in and awareness about the Gram Sabhas such that the people can take their own decisions; to allow the people to identify the hurdles in the path of development and find solutions.
4. To promote capacity building of women and marginalized sections of the rural society to create an environment of social acceptance towards women and dalits who are elected.
5. To develop networks with other NGOs and to motivate them to include the provision of Local Self Governance in their agenda.
6. To lobby for decentralization of power in order to make the provision of the 73rd amendment a reality for all.
7. To promote gender equality.
8. To increase women's participation in PRIs.

In collaboration with several People's Organizations, Astha has been working on two fronts:

1. Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions/Gram Sabhas.
2. Working to establish and increase the effectiveness of declared Village Republics in tribal villages of Schedule V areas.

Major events during the year

The Unit had organized a number of programmes for capacity building of elected women representatives, and also for male panchayat members, awareness programmes for Gram Sabha members, and for government staff to develop gender sensitivity for Panchayati Raj elected women representatives. The main activities are as follows:

Training of Women Elected Representatives

Astha is a lead training organization under the national programme of the Aagaz Academy, whose objective is to develop the leadership capacity of women elected representatives, by giving information about the roles and responsibilities of the elected members to fulfill their



duties in the local self-government body to which they have been elected. The training modules also work on building up the self-confidence of the women, by teaching them how to talk on the phone, how to read and write, how to ride a bicycle, how to introduce and thank resource persons. Astha has conducted 11 of these training programmes in the 12 months under reporting, including bridge courses and issue based trainings.

Women Elected Representatives Trainees

Dakhu Bai (50 yrs. of age), Sarpanch from Sisoda described how much she was afraid when she was first elected from a reserved seat. She felt too shy and had no knowledge of her roles and responsibilities. So she always sat alone quietly at the back. She said that she soon came in contact with Aagaz, and the Women's Capacity Building Workshop helped her to gain confidence and build knowledge. She realized that there is a great responsibility on her shoulders, and she now no longer sits at the back!

Sharmi Bai, Ward Member from Nichla Garh, Sirohi contested from a general seat. Sharmi won by a mere difference of little more than 100 votes against the male opposition candidate. A very important aspect is that women themselves are still ignorant about their own rights and the policies formulated especially for them. She shared that initially when she asked for the details of the expenditure and income of her panchayat, the leaders would not give her any information readily, but she continued to demand the statements about money. Finally her male counterparts gave up and provided her all the information demanded. Thus she inspired the other women elected representatives in the training to carry on the work and to keep themselves updated on the government rules and schemes. Some other women leaders also talked about their fight against corruption and how they have been able to remove all barriers related to caste, class, tribe and political affiliations.

A high-powered visitor group visited one of the training programmes. However, the interface that took place between the elected women representatives and the Norwegian delegation led by the Finance Minister of Norway revealed the strength and self-confidence of women from the local self-government councils.

When the Norwegian Finance Minister asked the local women leaders what issues they think are critical for their Panchayats, some of the ways in which PRI women are changing governance became evident in the issues they choose to tackle; tribal welfare, empowerment of widow women, capacity building of women leaders, water, alcohol abuse, education, health and domestic violence. Women also expressed different values. They valued proximity, whether it is to a drinking water source or a health centre.

On being questioned about the budget for their panchayat and sources of income, the women complained: "the men have always ridiculed us, and perceived us as incapable of the

management of financial affairs.” Details such as designing of tax structure and collecting of revenue so as to add to the state resources provided, were discussed by the women. It was found that the gram panchayat budgets varied from Rs. 2 to 50 lakh. Money comes from both local area and other sources such as taxes. The discussion with the Norwegians was informative, for both.

Some Road Blocks for Elected Women Representatives:

The elected women knew what are the factors which impede them, and what supports them, and the inputs and services they need to go ahead.

Among the former they included the following:

- Low literacy level
- Lack of information
- Restricted physical mobility
- Patriarchal controls
- Double burden of work
- Corrupt system
- Lacunae in laws relating to Panchayats
- No freedom for decision making

What the Elected Women Representatives Have Learned -

- ❖ They have learned to raise their voice and formulate proposals
- ❖ They have gained in self confidence and have learned to read and write and sign their names
- ❖ After attending the training camps, they have been able to stop the Sarpanchs (Chairperson of the Village Council) from “doing scams” (spending money with no work)
- ❖ They had no leadership skills earlier, but after undergoing the trainings of Astha, they were fully equipped with all type of necessary information
- ❖ Now they are able to question the Sarpanch and the Secretary about financial matters
- ❖ They have also gained the capacity to put their issues before the administrators and bureaucrats
- ❖ They were exposed to the experiences of the elected women representatives of other states
- ❖ They learnt how to make phone calls, ride a bicycle as well as to manage the position of Sarpanch in the Gram Panchayat
- ❖ Women Ward Panches (Ward Councilors) have started chairing their Ward Assembly meetings on their own
- ❖ They have learned to conduct the Gram Sabha (Village Assembly) meetings
- ❖ They have learnt about all the welfare schemes of the government and new legislation
- ❖ Their morale has been boosted, people have begun to listen them.

- ❖ They have learnt to manage accounts
- ❖ With their efforts, the participation of women in the Village Assemblies has increased
- ❖ They have learnt that they should sign anything only after knowing the full details

In addition to the Aagaz Academy trainings, the Unit has conducted other trainings for women elected representatives from the field areas of the People's Organizations in four districts of Southern Rajasthan, namely, Udaipur, Rajsamand, Dungarpur and Sirohi and from the work areas of other organizations in other districts of Rajasthan which request help in training. In this period, Astha has conducted:

- 1 training in Agra,
- 1 training in Ajmer,
- 3 trainings in Dungarpur,
- 5 trainings in Rajsamand District.

The training curriculum included Personal Empowerment, Constituency Building and Technical Skills. The course has been conceptualized as a process of co-learning that leads to an unfolding of potential that is inherent in the participants. The focus is not so much on "giving information" as on learning how to "access information".

Dialogue of Elected Women Representatives with the Panchayati Raj Minister

The Unit organized an elected women representatives dialogue on 26th August 2006 at the Astha Training Center. About 400 elected representatives participated in the programme from Udaipur, Rajsamand, Sirohi and Dungarpur districts. In the inaugural session of the training programme of capacity building of women elected representatives, the chief guest was Shri Kalu Lal Gurjar - the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister, Rajasthan Government. He said, "In society, the women are considered weak and are discriminated against. It is inexcusable that even after 60 years of Independence we are not able to change the customs of Parda (veiling of the face), dowry and gender inequality. The coming up of women for village development and work in the Panchayati Raj system is a symbol that we are working in the direction of eradicating these customs." He was glad that the training programme was being organized.

The problems of elected representatives were discussed and a **memorandum** was given asking that the government

- abolish the rule that if a person has more than two children, they cannot stand for election to PRIs – since women in the society do not yet have control over their sexuality
- The government should make a law outlining in detail, the powers and authority of the Panchayati Raj Institutions over funds, detailing their roles and functions, including their control over the functionaries and the portion of the Budget which is to be spent by the PRIs, of the 16 Departments which relate to the local self government bodies.
- Panchayati Raj Institutions should be allotted 10% of the State Revenue.

State-Level Workshop

Later, at the State Level Workshop on Panchayati Raj held 29-30 December, 2006, 73 participants from 11 districts of Rajasthan took part in the workshop which discussed the recommendations that came out of the National Round Table Conference of state ministers. At the Rajasthan level, a strategy was planned, lobbying and advocacy was done and a memorandum was sent to the Governor, to the Panchayati Raj Minister (Government of Rajasthan) and to the Panchayati Raj Minister (Government of India). The memorandum covered the same points (above) as were discussed with the Panchayati Raj Minister.

Later, as follow-up, a delegation of women elected representatives and civil society representatives, met the President of the Finance Commission as well as the Minister, Panchayati Raj, Government of Rajasthan. Continuous follow-up is continuing.

Lobbying and Advocacy with the State Finance Commission

To raise the state revenue money allotment for Panchayati Raj, there were 3 consultations with the President of the State Finance Commission. The demand was that 10% of the state revenue should be given to the local self-government bodies. He said that this year, they would recommend 2.25 %, a raise from 1.28%.

District-Level Organizations of Women Elected Representatives

In 9 Districts of Rajasthan, district-level Panch / Sarpanch Organizations were formed with the help of network organizations by the Local Self Governance Resource Unit. The objective of the Organizations is to strengthen the voices of the women elected representatives in lobbying the state government, and to provide a “self-help forum” of women to help solve problems that arise at the Gram Panchayat level.

In this financial year, these groups together lobbied the state government to remove the rule that after 1995, those persons having more than 2 children could not stand for election – (women do not have control over their bodies to this extent, and therefore, the rule discriminates against women as candidates.) There are very few younger women, coming forward to stand for election because of this rule. A memorandum was also given to the state government asking that funds be provided directly to the Gram Panchayat for development schemes, and also, to increase allowances to attend meetings. The state government has announced the provision of Rs. 600 from Rs. 400 for Sarpanches, and for Ward Panches, an amount of Rs. 30, which was Rs. 20 earlier, for attending the meetings

There were also lobbying points related to provisions of the Central government supporting PRIs which the Rajasthan state government has not taken advantage of, although the state government has signed the MOU with the Centre.

In one of the Districts, Rajsamand District, the Resource Unit is working on a pilot basis with the Panch/Sarpanch Organization. The meetings are held on the 10th of every month at the Block level in Khamnor, Rajsamand district. The objective is to share experiences, discuss problems in the panchayat and plan for campaigns. The issues that were discussed were:

- Capacity building for women elected representatives
- Literacy campaign for illiterate women elected members
- Female foeticide
- Information about Government schemes
- Budget Distribution according to the Gram Sabha and Ward Sabha agenda.
- Current other issues were also discussed.

At the beginning 7 members formed the working committee. At present there are 73 participants in the working committee, and about 300 members of the Organization. Among them, 122 members are from Khamnor Block. The working committee of Khamnor Block consists of 21 members at present. The Organization membership fee is Rs. 21/-; some funds are also collected through donations.

Micro Planning

The Unit is helping the Gram Panchayats to learn how to make the Micro Plans they need to make at the grass root level. This year Astha is working with 7 Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) in the 3 Districts of Udaipur, Banswara and Rajsamand. The report will be submitted to the Block Development Officer and he would further plan according to the schemes.

Committees of Aware Citizens (Panchayat Jagrook Manch)

For the past 2-3 years, Astha has been working with citizen groups in 23 areas (in 58 Gram Panchayats) and helping the Committee members to become aware of the roles and responsibilities of the Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) and Gram Sabhas (Village Assemblies) at the local level. The work of these Committees is to be a “watch-dog” of the Gram Panchayat elected members, to see that they work with efficiency and sincerity, and honesty. Their work is also to make all citizens in the Gram Panchayat area, aware of their responsibilities to be vigilant, and to attend the Gram Sabha meetings when they are held. The Committees meet monthly in the Gram Panchayat. The Resource Unit conducted 3 training programmes on issues, like BPL (Below Poverty Line family provisions) and PDS (Public Distribution System, or ration shop system) at the District level, and there were 161 participants. Astha has been training members of the 58 Gram Panchayats selected, in vigilance skills, and provided study material to Committee members. The Unit helps the Citizen Committees to take the issues forward at the Government level and to solve problems.

Literacy Initiative for Illiterate Elected Representatives

This year, an experiment in a “crash condensed literacy course” was tried for the elected



women who are illiterate. In the basic Panchayati Raj training programme, which is residential, the first 2 hours of every day is for literacy training. Then, when the women go home, Astha has identified literate young men and women, who take the responsibility of continuing to make literate 2 elected representatives from the training programme, along with 2-3 others from the same geographical area. This approach has worked well, and **1,452 elected women all over Rajasthan are targeted to**

become functionally literate, of whom, 690 have acquired literacy skills in the year 2006-2007. The effort is continuing.

Block Level Officials Workshops:

In Salumber Block, Udaipur District, on 11 September, 2006, a 1-day workshop was organized for the Block level officials who relate to the elected women representatives of the Gram Panchayats.

A similar workshop was also held in Kamnor Block of Rajsamand District on December 26, 2006.

In each workshop, the PHED (drinking water), Health Department, BDO, Education officer, Development Extension officer, and the civil engineer attended, along with some women elected representatives. Aside from Gender sensitization to the needs of women elected representatives, coordination between the elected representatives and the Block level offices was discussed. In each meeting, there were about 24 Block officials, and 11 women elected representatives.

Campaign on the BPL Issue and Gram Sabha Mobilization

- (a) The new lists of families listed as Below Poverty Line families (BPL families) was to be finalized in the period under reporting. Efforts were made by the Resource Unit to make the elected representatives aware of the government provisions, and also that the lists would be finalized in Village Assemblies, or Gram Sabhas. Meetings of elected representatives were held to discuss BPL issues. Training for the Campaign to see that the really poor people were included in the BPL lists, were held by Astha for NGO workers, members of the Committees of Aware Citizens, and members of People's Organizations. 5,000 pamphlets were distributed in Rajsamand and Udaipur Districts. As a result of the Campaign, appeals were made to include poor families as follows: in Rajsamand District, the appeal for 480 people from Nathdwara Block, 630 from Railmagra, 40 from Khamnor Block; in Udaipur District, the appeal for 95 people from Jhadol Block, 109 from Salumber Block, 45 from Sarada Block; and in Banswara District, the appeal for 147 people was made. This Campaign benefited 1,546 people altogether.
- (b) 4 Campaigns were organized to increase people's participation in Gram Sabha meetings. The various Gram Panchayats or Village Councils played their roles in planning the campaign. Panches and Sarpanches worked for the Gram Sabha mobilization.

Tribal Self Rule – Work with the Gram/Gaon Sabhas of PESA

The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 covers many of the Blocks of Southern Rajasthan, which fall in Schedule V Areas, where adivasi people are in the majority. In the Blocks and villages of Southern Rajasthan, many of which are areas where Astha has worked over the past 15-20 years, there are about 325 Village Republics, each with its Gram/Gaon Sabha, and a Committee of each Gram/Gaon Sabha has been formed of those taking responsibility for the implementation of decisions of the Gram/Gaon Sabha. The Local Self-Governance Resource Unit has also been giving training to the area NGO workers, and to Committee Members of the Tribal Self Rule villages. In addition, all the Gram/Gaon Sabha members have taken part in 1-day trainings about TSR¹. Some issue-based trainings for tribal leaders in these villages have also been conducted, on credit issues, Employment Guarantee Act awareness, etc.

Also in connection with Tribal Self Rule, the Rajasthan Government passed the state legislation in 1999, operationalizing the PESA legislation in Rajasthan. But up to now – 8 years – it has not framed the Rules under which the Rajasthan PESA is to operate, and so it

¹ TSR – Tribal Self Rule

remains dormant! Astha, along with 2 TSR Gram/Gaon Sabhas, filed a Public Interest Litigation Case in the High Court against the Government of Rajasthan, for not framing the Rules for PESA up to now, and now the court will order the Government to frame the Rules. Both the Local Self Governance Resource Unit, and the People's Organizations Resource Unit have been working together on this issue along with the 2 TSR village Committees.

The local self Governance Unit has conducted a number of training programmes to strengthen the Tribal Self Rule in South Rajasthan:

- Tribal leaders training (8)
- Youth and students' training programme (2)
- Gram/Gaon Sabha leaders training (2)

In Southern Rajasthan, a network named the Southern Rajasthan Village Republic Council has been organized to work for the effective implementation of TSR. This network consists of NGO's and Gram/Gaon Sabha committee members. They work for the rights of Adivasis over Natural Resources and for other tribal rights (minor minerals, liquor shops or no, the implementation of development projects in their area, debt issues, etc.).

Documentation

The Unit has undertaken documentation work for the benefit of others and for institutional memory.

- The newspaper- Panchayat Jagurakta Samachar (News for Aware Panchayats), published bi-monthly
- 2 booklets were published- "Panchyati Raj aur Ward Panch" (Panchayati Raj and Ward Panch or Ward Councilor) and "Rajasthan Gramin Vikas avum Samajik Suraksha Yojna" (Rajasthan Rural Development and Social Security Schemes),
- Posters were made explaining major provisions of the Panchayati Raj Act 1994, the Panchayati Raj three tier system, major rights and duties of the Ward Sabha, Ward Panch, Gram Sabha and Sarpanch, Standing committees of the Gram Panchayat, Quorum meetings of the Village Council or Gram Panchayat, Responsibilities of the Secretary of the Village Council, and the role of women elected representatives.
- Pamphlets were printed about issues like BPL, the importance of attending Gram Sabha meetings, RTI (Right to Information Act) etc.
- In addition there are reports for each event and activity. These documents are shared with all the in-house Units of Astha, and other NGOs.

Research Studies

Research is being done in 4 Gram Panchayats of Jhadol Block of Udaipur district, on how much funds have been received by the Gram Panchayat according to the Gram Sabha recommendations and resolutions. Data has been collected, and analysis is underway.

In Sararda Block, there was another study conducted, on "The Workings of the Gram Sabhas, and Their Effect on Development in the Area".

In Rajsmand District, a study was done on "Women's Participation in Panchayati Raj". An effort was made to find out if development initiatives for women and girls were taken up by women elected representatives, and if social sector initiatives were taken up.

LIVELIHOOD RESOURCE UNIT

This Unit has been working since 2004 mainly on issues related to land, forest and water -- the available natural resources for the survival of the tribal people in Southern Rajasthan. Gradually, these resources are shrinking; the livelihoods of the Tribal People of Rajasthan depend on traditional natural resources and they are losing their rights over these natural resources due to state and national policies of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The result of this is that the Tribal people are facing Poverty, malnutrition and sickness. In the name of Development, Tribal people are being displaced from their ancestral lands. Hence, aside from working with Adivasi people to keep control of their livelihood resources, the Unit is also working on alternative livelihoods for the adivasis.

The Livelihood Unit of Astha works on issues of employment and rights over resources for livelihood. Astha has the strategy of working on issues that affect the lives of hundreds and thousands of poor people. The right of all to live, to earn and to eat motivates our action. Therefore, the work in this year has seen significant work done on:

- the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 to get it passed, -- has seen a lot of hard advocacy and struggle work
- the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act implementation in the state
- the Right to Food Campaign in Rajasthan
- state-level mobilization about the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) being planned for Rajasthan tribal lands for growing “jatropa” or ratan jote (bio-deisel!).

(a) Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006

For the last 12 years, Astha has been working on the issue of Tribal forest land rights. Astha has played a key role in building up **The Forest Land People's Movement (FLPM)** as a



grass roots People's Movement with an informal structure. There are no officers and it is not a registered body. All important decisions of the Movement are made collectively – about action planning, implementation and administration.

Meetings of the Coordinating Committee are normally held every 2-3 months. However "emergency" meetings can be called at any time. The Coordinating Committee collects government

documentation related to forest land rights issues. It also provides support and legal advice to the Movement delegations meeting government officials. This Committee is also responsible for decisions regarding the national level campaign.

Divisional Committee meetings are held on the 7th of every month at which time issues are raised, strategies for further actions are developed and dates of actions are finalized. The

Divisional Committee is also responsible for policies and decisions regarding interactions with other local organizations.

The Block Committees are responsible for meeting with local level government officials (e.g. Tehsildar, Patwari, etc.). Block Committee meetings provide an opportunity for FLPM members to share the problems faced by Block members in an effort to develop solutions with other members. In more serious cases, the broader membership joins forces to provide the strength of numbers. The most serious Block level problems are taken to the Divisional Committee for consideration.

For example, in June 1997, the Forest Department evicted the Adivasi families from Machura Village in Kumbhalgarh Block from the land where they lived, had built homes and dug wells. This situation was raised first at the Block level meeting, and then taken to the Divisional Committee. After Block Level members had done physical verification of these homesteads, and the Divisional Committee presented the evidence to Forest Department officials, and the evicted families were allowed to return to their homes.

Without the grassroots participation of the People at the Block Level, the Movement's struggle could not have been sustained. Following the first 10 years of struggle, the Movement joined other organizations and activists to take the struggle to the national level. With this national focus, the People's commitment to the Movement was rejuvenated.

The People were advised that the Gram Sabha has been authorized to initiate the process for determining the nature and extent of individual or community rights. Two FLPM representatives from each Block were selected during the November 7th meeting to form Divisional Level Committees charged with initiating the process of identifying individual rights. The Forest Rights Act was passed in December 2006, and dates were then set for Block level meetings in late January and February 2007 to select 2 FLPM representatives from each Panchayat to form Block Level Committees and 2 FLPM representatives from each Village to form Gram Panchayat level Committees. These Committees are to assist the Gram Sabha to receive claims for regularization of land possessions, consolidate and verify them and prepare maps delineating each claim. Based on this work, the Gram Sabha will forward resolutions of rights to the government constituted committees at the Sub-Divisional level for recording, and then at the District level for finalizing claims for regularization. The focus is now on *implementing* the Act.

FLPM representatives were told to encourage the People in their areas to start preparing their individual files outlining their forest land rights for submission to the Gram Sabha. It was suggested that copies of any document issued prior to December 13th, 2005, which confirms occupancy of their land prior to this date, should be included in their claims.

The National Campaign for Survival and Dignity has prepared a poster outlining, in simple, everyday language, the important features of the Act. The FLPM members were told that 5,000 copies would be available for distribution in southern Rajasthan.

Events of the Struggle of the Forest Land People's Movement in the Past Year:

Jan. 06	The draft Bill was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for review.
9 May 06	The JPC presented its unanimous report with significant recommended changes to the Tribal Bill at a Parliamentary hearing
31 July 06 - 5 Aug 06	Under the banner of the FLPM, some 20 families from Gogunda and Kotra Blocks of Udiapur District, that were being threatened with eviction by the Forest Department, sat in front of the Tribal Commissioner's Office and demanded that they not be evicted from their forest land homesteads. Five days later, the Tribal Commissioner met with the Collector and a Forest Department Official and decided that given the introduction of the Forest Rights Bill to Parliament, these evictions must be stopped. These families were given written assurance from the Tribal Commissioner that they would not be evicted without proper verification consistent with the new Bill once it became law. The people returned to their homes
21-25 Aug. 06	Adivasis from across the country congregated at a Sit-In at Jantar Mantar near the Parliament Building in New Delhi to demand the passage of the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005 with the required amendments as per the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee. This Sit-In lasted five days with people from across the country protesting and demanding their rights. The protesters received declarations of support from every corner of the political spectrum, from numerous civil society leaders, and from everyone from environmentalists to former Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes Commissioners.
22 Nov. 06-18 Dec. 06	A Sit-In began in front of the Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, demanding that the Tribal Bill be approved
29 Nov. 06	Mass demonstrations were held in six cities – Delhi, Mumbai, Bhubaneswar, Ranchi, Chennai and Bangalore. Jantar Mantar witnessed a 10,000 strong demonstration of tribal people and forest dwellers from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh. More than 2,500 FLPM members from Rajasthan joined other forest dwellers and their supporters in Delhi. Protesters demanded that the government pass the Forest Rights Bill with JPC amendments
15 Dec. 06-18 Dec. 06	The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 was passed by Lok Sabha and by the Rajya Sabha 3 days later.
7 Jan. 07	A meeting was held between the Divisional level members of the FLPM and the FLPM's Coordinating Committee in Udaipur to plan the implementation in southern Rajasthan of the new Forest Rights Act.
28-30 Jan. 07	A Meeting of CSD (The Campaign for Survival and Dignity) was held in Bhopal to plan the implementation of the new Act and plan future actions in the interest of forest land dwellers.

The following key successes were instrumental in the FLPM maintaining the commitment of the People over the more than 10 years of the struggle:²

- Mobilizing and uniting tribal people suffering from common injustices and similar atrocities. As more people joined the Movement, individual conviction to fight against injustices against them was strengthened;
- Exploited Adivasis gained the strength to stand up for their rights and property against the atrocities and evictions committed by Forest officials;
- Individuals no longer had to fight for the right to their land on their own but had the support of friends and neighbors who were all fighting for the same cause. Other vested interests in forest lands soon realized that the adivasi forest dwellers would now fight together to defend their rights. As a result, the violation of their rights became more problematic for the perpetrators
- Local communities realized they must unite to solve their common problems. Committees at every level from Village, to Tehsil, to Block, to District became stronger as the people united;
- Prior to the formation of the FLPM, the Government had ignored any cases for regularization of forest land. Now government has accepted and is prepared to regularize thousands of possessions. Government has also banned the cutting of trees on forest land while forest dwellers have initiated reforestation and forest conservation activities. People once again regard the forests as their own and have restore their symbiotic relationship with forests
- Passing of the first piece of legislation that recognized Adivasis' rights to their traditional forest lands and the forest resource. This has been a great victory for the poor and marginalized Adivasis of Southern Rajasthan.
- Perhaps the greatest achievement of the FLPM has been its ability to identify and cultivate the strength of the People themselves, who are now the leaders and activists of their own cause!

Jameen Apne Aap Ki

Nahi Kisee Kay Baap Ki

The Land Belongs to The People

Not To Any Individual Or Department!!

Nayee Nahi Kherengay

Purani Nahi Chorengay

We Will Never Plough New Ground

We Will Never Leave Our Old Homesteads!

² Two Books have been published by Astha this year, on the 10 year struggle of the people with the Government for their livelihood right over their homestead lands. (One version is in Hindi, one in English.)

Case Study

Issue: Jungle Jameen (Forest Land)

Village: Kundal, Tehsil: Bali, District: Pali.

In the village Kundal, 18 tribal families earned their livelihood by cultivating 15-20 bighas of land. One day they received a notice that the land they were cultivating was forest land, and they were considered as "encroachers" on their own land. This incident took place in 2002. Even after great effort by the people, the forest department officials destroyed the standing crops and the houses/huts of the people, in the presence of Bijapur police. The case was filed, but the decision was in favour of the opposition. The forest department planted trees. All the 18 families were not able to break the relationship with their land and had hope that they will get the land back. This hope gave them strength. During this period they got associated with the organization, the Forest Land People's Movement. They took part in protest demonstrations - rally, Sit Ins, etc. People from Kundal assembled at various places in India, including Delhi, to demand a strong law to protect tribal and other forest dwellers from eviction.

Finally the Government passed the law the "Forest Rights Bill" on 15th December 2006. All the 18 families held a meeting on 31st Dec. and decided to stay there on their lands and struggle for their rights. In the month of January they re-possessed their land and laid claim to their huts. They were penalized for this and were sent to jail for 14-15 Jan.'07, as bail was not provided. Still they possess the land and are ready to give their life for their rights. Women of the village play a significant role.

(b) The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) Implementation in the State

This important Central Government programme, which came into being in February 2006, to provide 100 days of labour work per year to rural families, initially in 200 Districts in the country – of which 6 Districts are in Rajasthan³ - was welcomed by the Astha Team, since we have been campaigning for it for some time. We are all working to make it a success, for it will never be expanded if the first 200 Districts are a failure!

Formation of the *Rozgar Evum Suchna Ka Adhikar Abhiyan* (The Employment and Right to Information Campaign):

The major objective of the Campaign in Rajasthan was to work for the effective implementation of NREGA and the Right to Information Act to ensure the rights of the People, which are mentioned in both Acts. The key role players are: MKSS (Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan – The Labourers and Farmers Strong Organization); Astha, Udaipur; Jan Chetna, Sirohi; Vagad Mazdoor Kisan Sangathan (Vagad Labourers and Farmers Organization), Dungarpur; and local people's groups and organizations and NGOs.

Campaign Experience:

In the last year, Astha has worked on the NREGA in all 6 Rajasthan Districts, to make the people aware of the rules and regulations, systems, procedures - and their right to get work. The effective monitoring and implementation of the NREGA needs the use, often, of the "Right to Information Act" – to be able to see the muster-rolls to check numbers of workers, payments, etc. Astha has played a major role in the Campaign for the effective implementation of these Acts.

³ The Districts are: Banswara, Dungarpur, Udaipur, Sirohi, Karauli, Jhalawar

Dungarpur District –

Mass Level Awareness Padyatra⁴

The Livelihood Resource Unit worked closely with the Employment and Right to Information Campaign with local People's Organizations and NGOs of Dungarpur, and did the background homework which enabled almost 800-900 activists, government officers, and academics to conduct a Social Audit of the civil works going on under the NREGA. In addition to the Audit, the padyatra teams created mass level awareness, during 10 days in April 2006, among the people living in 5 Blocks of the District. The intensive mass level social Audit in Dungarpur covered 800 villages of 5 Blocks. Reporters of different newspapers, from 20 states of India, and 10 delegates from Bangladesh, and Volunteers from the villages of Dungarpur district were the padyatris.



This mass level Social Audit program from 15-26 April 2006, (two days training program for Padyatris and eight days in villages), enabled 31 teams to cover 1,000 work places, visit Gram Panchyat headquarters and check the records on the works under the NREGA. Night stay was at villages schools, and the padyatris had food with local families -- one family / one member. The last day was a convention to share experiences. It was an important learning event for hundreds. Astha played a key role in the Campaign planning, training, coordination and the result of the efforts was the great success of this big event.

Social Audit Follow up: The follow up to the April Social Audit program, was held January 2-7, 2007 in 15 Gram Panchyats of 5 Blocks of Dungarpur district. This follow up Social Audit was conducted with support of The Employment and Right to Information Campaign, People's Organizations, NGOs, and the District Administration. This Padyatra had 15 teams of 250 People from the above mentioned organizations, and the teams spent 4 days in the villages. On the last day of the follow up Social Audit, a sharing of the findings of the padyatra teams was held, in the presence of the District Collector and the NREGA Commissioner of Rajasthan, and decisions were made about action to be taken by the District Administration.

⁴ "Padyatra" means "walking tour" or "foot march", but carries with it a tour or march with a social purpose. In this case, teams of people spreading awareness about the need for Job Cards, about the fact that work needs to be given within 15 days, etc. The "padyatris" contact rural people and communities with their social purpose.

Banswara District -



Awareness: Astha conducted a training program on NREGA and the Right to Information Act to create awareness about the possibilities of this programme, with People's Organizations, NGOs, Public Representatives, and the District Administration. Participants from 20 NGOs and People's Organizations attended the training program from 16-17 December 2006.

Sirohi District:

Social Audit: With the support of Jan Chetna Sansthan and other Local People's Organizations, Astha has supported the Social Audit of works one Gram Panchyat, Girvar Gram Panchayat, in the month of May.

Jhalawar District:

District level orientation program: This orientation was organized with the support of Local NGOs, People's Organizations and the District Administration was present.

Karoli District -

Awareness: A programme was conducted with support of People's Organizations and NGOs for primary stage orientation and to create awareness.

Social Audit: Astha conducted a Social Audit with support of local NGOs and the Employment and Right to Information Campaign in Nadoti Block in the month of May.

Udaipur District -

Block Level Awareness Conventions: From the beginning stages of the NREGA, the Resource Unit created mass level awareness in Blocks of Udaipur district. Astha conducted Block Level Conventions in Kotra, Jhadol, Gogunda, Kherwara, Sarada, Dhariyawad, Salumber, Bhinder and Mavli Blocks with the support of local People's Organizations and NGOs.

Social Audit: Astha conducted a Social Audit with support of the Tribal Development Forum, Kotra, in 168 villages of 31 Gram Panchyats of from June 11-15, 2006. Finally the findings were discussed with the District Collector, and recommendations for action were made.

Social Audit in 11 Blocks (With Support of MORD⁵ Government of India and the State Government): This Social Audit was conducted with the Employment and Right to Information Campaign and the District Administration from February 19-21, 2007. This Social Audit was conducted in 11 Gram Panchyats, 1 Gram Panchayat from each Block, and 11 teams (225 People from People's Organizations, NGOs, Government Officers, students from related university departments). Astha and MKSS oriented the team members in the Social Audit process. The 11 padyatra Teams did a Social Audit and conducted a Gram Sabha and put the Social Audit findings in the Gram Sabha with the support of the

⁵ MORD – Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India

Government officials. This special Gram Sabha was conducted on the subject of the NREGA. The event was intended as a training programme for government officers in the country, and from 14 states, 60 Senior IAS officers attended and participated. Finally 2 days discussions on the NREGA findings were held at the District head quarters with the Senior IAS officers. These senior officers will make rules and regulations, social audit formats, manuals and guidelines for Social Audits in the country.

(c) The Right to Food Campaign

The Livelihood Resource Unit conducted a state-level Workshop on Food Rights Issues in Jaipur, January 16-18, 2007. 135 participants from NGOs and People's Organizations gathered from 25 districts of Rajasthan and made future action plans, in relation to Ration Shops, the School Lunch Programme, the ICDS nursery school programme, pension schemes.

Bhanwar Singh Chadana of Astha's Livelihood Resource Unit, Udaipur, Kavita Shrivastav (PUCL⁶, Jaipur) and Pradeep Bhargava (IDS⁷, Jaipur and Advisor of Supreme court Commissioner on Food Security) facilitated the workshop. During the 3 days, information was presented on different aspects of Food Security including:



- Food security from the perspective of the poor
- Legal initiatives on the right to food
- The Right to Food Campaign in India and in Rajasthan
- Children's Right to Food
- The Public Distribution System and Below Poverty Line Identification
- The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
- Special Economic Zones
- Social Security of Marginalized groups (single women and the homeless)
- The Supreme Court appointed Commissioner Monitoring System to see that the Supreme Court judgement on the Right to Food is implemented

The coverage, nutrition and discrimination in the implementation of the various government schemes was discussed and analysed. Needed changes in the PDS and BPL systems were pointed out. Concern for low-income widows, the aged, the handicapped, Dalit children, was also included in the discussions and planning.

⁶ PUCL – People's Union for Civil Liberties, a human rights organization

⁷ IDS – Institute of Development Studies – a social research organization

A Workshop on SEZ - (Special Economic Zone) and Biofuel Policy

A state level workshop was conducted on 10-11 February, 2007. 135 participants from People's Organizations and NGOs from 17 Districts of Rajasthan attended. They discussed SEZ, Biofuel policy and land alienation.

(a) The SEZ policy --

The policy was introduced in India in April 2000 to provide an internationally competitive and hassle free environment for exports. SEZ are specifically delineated as duty-free enclaves, treated as a foreign territory for the purpose of industrial, service and trade operations, with exemption from custom duties, and with a more liberal regime in respect of other levies, foreign investment and other transactions. Domestic regulations, restrictions and infrastructure inadequacies are sought to be eliminated in the SEZs. The SEZ scheme seeks to create a transparent system by introducing simplified procedures for enhancing productivity and making it easier to do business. According to the Government of India guidelines, SEZ can be developed in the public, private and joint sectors, or by the State Government. *They are expected to promote the establishment of large, self-contained areas supported by world-class infrastructure, oriented towards export production.* Exploiting the full potential of the concept, SEZs would bring large dividends to the State in terms of economic and industrial development and generation of new employment opportunities. This is the theory behind the SEZ policy.

Till September 2006, the Government cleared a total of 267 SEZ's, of which 150 got "formal" and 117 "in principle" approvals with more in the pipeline. The rapidly rising Indian Multi-National Companies, among them for example, the Reliance group, is planning at least 4 SEZs viz., 2 in Mumbai- the Navi Mumbai SEZ (NMSEZ) and a joint venture with CIDCO Maha Mumbai SEZ (MSEZ) on 10,000 hectares; another is spread over Grumman and Jhajjar districts of Haryana. This is the biggest push for industrial expansion in post-independence India. Of all the approved SEZ's, totaling 1,40,000 acres of land, RELIANCE alone stands to gain 60,000 acres of land. Other corporates in this land grab scheme include UNITECH with 25,000 acres; SAHARA 20,000 acres; MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA, 10,000 acres, HCC, 10,000 acres, among others.

The establishment of these industrial giants is resulting in large-scale diversion of land with serious implications. These land acquisitions, for 237 SEZ's, are around 34,509 hectares, endangering the livelihoods of thousands of farmers. State Governments too have been acquiring land under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 without fair relief and rehabilitation packages, or even compensation, to the displaced. The adverse impact of SEZs on the agriculture sector has led to widespread unrest.

In the meeting, it was felt that there is no "waste or barren land" available for the companies! There was major opposition to the idea to give land to the Companies:

- ❖ The biggest threat of SEZ - the loss of agricultural land. The huge tracts of prime agricultural land will reach the hands of economists.
- ❖ Because of Displacement, communities will be disrupted. Social structures will collapse. The livelihood bases will change. There will be a threat to the culture of people and in total, it will have negative impact on the society.
- ❖ Because rules and regulations will be suspended, the Industrial Dispute Act and other labour laws will not be implemented and therefore the labourers will face problems.
- ❖ It will have adverse impact on the environment due to the extraction of groundwater on a large scale. There will be increase in water, land and air pollution.

- ❖ Due to reduction in taxes, the Central Government will suffer a loss of Rs. 97,000 thousand crore that will have direct effect on rural development. Essential commodities will become expensive. The government will lose revenue, and this will affect the government schemes and programmes. Tax revenue will have to come from other sources, and in total, the masses of the people will suffer.
- ❖ SEZ will adversely impact India's food security system – loss of agriculture land, export of agriculture products. Copying North countries patterns do not work in India, where the population is more, agriculture land is less, and the maximum agriculture production is needed in order to feed the population.

(b) Biofuel Policy

Looking at the possibilities of growing Ratanjote and other related oil plants, the Biofuel Mission was established in the year 2005-2006. During the IV session of the workshop, the issue of the Biofuel policy was discussed and a major issue came up about the government's decision to give 30% of the land in Adivasi areas to Companies for plantation of Ratanjote ("jatropa", or biofuel) in Tribal areas.

Over the last few years, national efforts are being made to use biofuel as another energy option. According to the government, under this biofuel policy, Ratanjote can be a good source of energy. It can be used instead of diesel.

This policy has been implemented in many states. Among the major ones are Chattisgarh, M.P., Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. As per the Government thinking, the Biofuel is not only a good source of energy but also it will help in the economic development of rural areas, and will provide large scale employment. At the same time, wasteland can be utilized. This policy has been implemented in Rajasthan. Rajasthan is a big state in terms of area. In terms of wasteland, the state has 31% of barren land, which is around 1-lakh hectares. The objectives of the Mission are plantation of Ratanjote, Karanj and other oil plants.

The policy promises to reduce by 20% the diesel import and it amounts to 22,000 crores according to policy makers.

Allotment of Barren Land would be to –

1. Private companies
2. BPL families and SHGs
3. Gram Panchayats
4. Agro Consumer Societies
5. Registered Societies
6. Village Forest Protection and Management Societies

Priority would be given to those private companies who along with plantation of these oil plants agree to:

- Establish Refinery Units
- Establish Biodiesel a Refinery
- Do Research and Development Work
- Develop better varieties of seeds, better quality of plants
- Provide employment to local people in the biofuel industry
- Buy Ratanjote at the minimum price fixed.

The private companies would be provided 30% of the acquired land, and the rest to other categories. Other Societies or groups would be allotted 100 hectares of land as compared to private companies that would be allotted the area limit of 1,000 hectares. The land will be

given on lease for 15 years @ 20% interest deposited with the District Level Committees, while no amounts will be charged for others.

Land for Ratanjote Plantation - The government passed an order requiring that the District Collectors search for suitable land for plantation of Ratanjote. Udaipur and Kota Districts have been selected according to climatic conditions favourable for Ratanjote plantation. The suitable temperature is 45° C maximum and more the 500 mm rainfall. There are ideal conditions.

People's Protest against the Policy - The policy was completely opposed by the people because the government planned / decided to implement the policy without doing any survey. This policy will not only displace thousands farmers but will also affect the environment adversely. According to the Forest Protection Act, 1980, the plantation of oil plants with respect to the environment in future is a threat to biodiversity. Other departments of the government also oppose this policy. The Forest and Revenue Departments have fears about the policy implementation. The government has no idea about the present land scenario, and that the tribes are well established on the land – the government has been told that the revenue land is barren and wasteland.

Exploitation of Farmers – The government will allot the land to the companies and Societies, but the farm families on the land will not be displaced. These farmers will continue to live there, and they will do the cultivation of the ratanjote. But there has been no clear policy about how much money the farmer/cultivator/labourers will earn. The government policy has given no information about how much oil will be generated from the seeds of Ratanjote and what selling cost will the farmers get.⁸

(c) Land Alienation-

During the workshop, the people were made aware of the Act (The Land Revenue Act), that under Section 42, the Tribal land cannot be transferred to a non-tribal in any condition. As land is a State subject, various States have enacted laws to prevent alienation of tribal land. However, people have circumvented these laws in various ways. Alienation of tribal land is the single most important cause of pauperization of tribals, rendering their vulnerable economic situation more precarious. Of even greater concern is the fact that the lands lost are usually the most productive, leaving the tribals to cultivate poor quality land that is extremely vulnerable to the vagaries of weather and rainfall. The total effect of land transfers has been devastating to the fragile tribal economy. Through the Land Revenue Act, Section 90B and 90A, it will be ensured that illegal transfer of tribal land holdings is eliminated and that the alienated land is restored to the tribal.

⁸ According to the Government experts the obtained fuel / diesel would be sold at the cost of Rs. 25/- per litre which is ideal with respect to the investment done. Accounting this 3-½ Kg good quality seeds would produce one litre diesel. Accordingly the selling amount of Ratanjote seeds would not exceed Rs. 5/Kg as compared to the market rate Rs. 10/Kg. Therefore this policy would lead to economic exploitation of the farmers. There is no clarification about it and the policy has not been defined clearly.

BUDGET ANALYSIS RAJASTHAN CENTRE (BARC)

The Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre (BARC) as an organisation of “budget analysis” and “budget advocacy” has been trying to create awareness among people in Rajasthan, advocating that the government budget is not a document that is isolated from our democracy; rather it is very much a component of our democracy. So, we need to understand it for the sake of the development of the people and thus for strengthening our democracy. If we do not know how much money is allocated for dalits, tribals, poor widows, other poor women, poor children, disabled people, workers of the unorganised-cum-informal sector, and small and marginal farmers, we will not be able to fight against the many evils of our society and improve the quality of life of the poor. We need to know which physical infrastructure is getting priority – national highways or rural-urban link roads; electricity supply in the cities or in the villages; infrastructure for special economic zones or for social services like education and health etc.

From 2002, BARC has been analysing Rajasthan Budgets in order to share the findings with the people and intervene in budgeting and governance from the perspective of the poor and marginalized. Now, we are going to present the report and results of our work carried out in 2006-2007.

Our Day-to-Day Budget Work

Budget analysis is a never-ending, continuous process. Both analysis and advocacy require constant work almost on daily basis. The data need to be updated for presentation, publication and sharing with others. It involves the task of overall state budget analysis, department-wise analysis, time-series or trend analysis, analysis of differences between allocations and outlays and then between outlays and outcome (i.e. whether or not desired number of people adequately benefited) etc. During the reporting period, BARC has given priority to:

- overall state budget,
- budgets for Dalits and Tribals,
- agriculture budget,
- animal husbandry budget,
- irrigation budget,
- health budget,
- education budget,

Capacity Building of MLAs

During the reporting period, we organised a budget orientation meeting for the Rajasthan MLAs on the 26th of September 2006. The focus of the meeting was on **“Budgets for Dalits and Tribals.”** Fourteen legislators, including the Home Minister, the Speaker of the Assembly and the leader of the opposition,



participated in the meeting. The State Congress Chief, Dr. B.D. Kalla, has also attended the meeting. In the meeting, it was shown through power point presentation that **the difference between the non-plan revenue expenditure and the plan revenue expenditure under the broad head of “Economic Services”** each year is huge, elaborating that non-plan revenue expenditure is much higher than plan revenue expenditure. The implication of such difference indicates that the Tribal people are not benefiting much through public expenditures since non-plan expenditure primarily covers most of the administration related spending and office recurring expenditures (e.g. salary, travelling allowances, medical allowances etc.). Also, significant capital expenditure through which physical infrastructure is created was not incurred for the tribal areas in the recent past. The Home Minister, is himself from the Udaipur tribal belt. During the presentation, he showed much interest in our analysis and explanation. We explained that, **due to very little plan revenue expenditure in the economic services, growth of economic activities is not increasing in the tribal areas;** or, in other words, economic activities are not being encouraged in the tribal areas. Very little assistance is provided to the tribal people for promoting their self-employment. Several other aspects regarding “Budgets for Tribals” were also widely discussed in the meeting.

With regard to the **Department of Social Welfare expenditures on Tribals and Dalits, only about 1% of the total budget is allocated to these two marginalized communities, whereas these two communities together comprise of about 30% of the state's population.** Moreover, there are 50 reserved Members in the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for these two communities, which is one-fourth of the total number of seats (i.e. 200) in the state legislature. An additional six unreserved seats are currently held by members of the Dalit and Tribal communities. However, **being unaware of the low level of expenditures made by the Social Welfare Department for Dalit and Tribal communities, these 56 MLAs have been unable to mobilize greater funds for their own communities.** Consequently, reservation of seats for the marginalized section of society is not enough to ensure proportional share of state expenditures. Legislators need to be aware of financial allocations and expenditures.

Another issue that has been discussed in the meeting is regarding a provision for the Dalits of Rajasthan, **the Special Component Plan (SCP). Through the SCP, it has been ensured that each department of the government would spend 17% (according to the percentage of SC population in the state) of the total plan size of the department.** This norm is ignored by most of the departments. Except a very few departments, like Social Welfare Department etc., most of the departments do not follow the SCP norms. There are several departments in the state which have even denied opening the 789 subhead in their budgets (SCP budget is allocated through the 789 subhead). 24 departments have already opened 789; 22 departments have denied opening 789; and seven departments are proceeding to open 789.

Capacity Building of Members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) / Local Bodies

In 2004-05 and 2005-06, we organised workshop-cum-trainings for Gram Panchayat (Village Council) members and Panchayat Samiti (Block Council) members consecutively. During the reporting period, we organised a workshop-cum-training for the **Zilla Parishad (District Council) members.** We organised the programme on **7- 8 November 2006** in Salasar, **Churu District.** In the workshop, **31** Zilla Parishad members came from 3 districts viz. Churu, Sikar and Jhunjhunu. It was a remarkable training since mobilizing so many District Council members at one place is a very difficult task. At the local level, Jhunjhunu District Environmental Action Society (Zilla Paryavaran Sudhar Samiti) helped us in mobilizing the District Council members. For 2 days, detailed discussions were held on budgets.

Issue-Based Meetings

During the reporting period, 4 issue-based meetings have been organised. The participants are selected from those who are working on the concerned issue. Through issue-based meetings we try to give in-depth knowledge and information to the participants about the selected topic or issue so that they can carry on their advocacy work with ample information and data. It is not that we finish our duty by organising one or two meeting/s in a year; rather continuous **follow-up** is done in various ways that we will be describing in the following pages.

- **“Budgets for Dalits”** –organised in Jaipur on **22 September 2006**. **60 people from 54 organisations** participated in the meeting. In Rajasthan, two main organisations have been working on Dalit issues. They are Centre for Dalit Rights and National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights. We organised this meeting in collaboration with these two organisations. Earlier these two Dalit organisations had been carrying on their movements primarily on the atrocity related issue. When we started jointly organising a meeting on budgets for Dalit people, it [budgets] appeared to be an eye-opener for them. After several meetings, they have been become aware of the budget related issues. Also, they can now relate the cases of atrocities with the funds allocated through budgets, since the victims of atrocities are entitled to get some compensation from the government. Not only this, through budget knowledge they have also become aware of several other welfare schemes (e.g. assistance for inter-caste marriage, scholarships for students etc.) that are beneficial to them. And they are publicizing those schemes among their members and making them aware of increase/decrease of allocations/expenditures. In this meeting, we not only presented the analysis of the budgets of Social Welfare Department, but also the budgets under Special Component Plan (SCP), discussed above.
- **Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Budgets** -- organised in Jalore District on **6-7 October 2006** in collaboration with Sankalp Sansthan, Ahore, Jalore District. The meeting was attended by **35 participants** from **30** different organisations of the districts of Jalore, Pali, Jodhpur, Barmer and Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.
- **Budgets for Tribals, including the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) Budgets** -- conducted in Dungarpur District on **10 October 2006**. Organisational help was taken from the Vagad Labourers and Farmers Organization and **104 participants** from different organisations working for the cause of the tribal people of Dungarpur, Banswara, and Chittorgarh Districts attended and participated in discussions.
- **The Midday Meal Scheme** -- was conducted at the State Resource Centre in Jaipur on **29 November 2006**. The meeting was attended by **40 representatives** of 25 organisations of the State. In our study, lots of anomalies were found in the implementation of the midday meal scheme in different districts. The information was shared with the participants and the participants said that they would keep close watch on the implementation of the scheme in their own districts.

Orientation and Awareness Events

During the reporting period, BARC has organized 4 regional budget awareness meetings in 4 different districts of the state, including one state level in Jaipur. The focus of such meetings is given on some major departments related to social sector i.e. health, education, social welfare (including Dalits and Tribals) and also some departments related to economic sector like agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry etc. The difference between an issue-based meeting and a regional meeting is that a regional meeting covers discussion of the budgets of

several relevant departments whereas an issue-based meeting sheds light only one topic or issue.

- **23-24 June 2006** -- the first regional budget orientation program was conducted in the district of **Bharatpur** with the organisational help of Samantar Sansthan. The total number of participants was **52**. Representatives of the different organizations that are working in the districts of Bharatpur, Karoli, Alwar and Dholpur participated in the meeting.
- **13-14 July 2006** – a workshop was organized in **Chittorgarh District** with the organisational help of Prayas Sansthan, Chittorgarh, and **37 participants** came from 18 different organisations of the districts of Chittorgarh, Ajmer, Bhilwara, Banswara and Jodhpur. Later we received letters from a few participants that they learned a lot from the workshop we conducted and, as they said, such kind of workshops should be organised further in their districts.
- **11-12 September 2006** -- a state-level budget orientation program was conducted in **Jaipur** and was conducted in the beginning of September to remind many of our partners that the Government starts preparing budgets from the beginning of September. So, September-December is high time to do advocacy and lobbying as far as pro-poor budget is concerned. **24 key participants** attended the meeting from 23 NGOs and people's organisations located in the districts of Jaisalmer, Barmer, Ajmer, Tonk, Rajsamand, Nagore, Sikar, Dausa, Jaipur and Jhunjhunu.
- **20-21 September 2006** -- we organised another regional budget meeting in **Jhalawar district** with the local organisational help of Hum Kisan Sangathan, Jhalawar. In the meeting, **34** representatives attended from 11 organisations that are engaged in social work or social movement based in the districts of Jhalawar, Jaipur and Kota.

National Workshop on Budget Analysis and Advocacy

A number of organizations are working in India to ensure the poor people's due share in government budgets. In order to facilitate greater networking among the budget analysis organizations across the country through further dialogue, sharing and cooperation, a **national workshop on budget analysis and advocacy** was organized by BARC in Jaipur on **22-24 February 2007**.

This workshop provided **13 budget analysis organizations of India** from Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, New Delhi, West Bengal and Rajasthan. The opportunity was provided to share and exchange views on:

- current budget issues they face;
- findings of their budget analysis;
- case studies;
- methods of disseminating their findings;
- strategies for advocacy and lobbying; and
- impacts of their budget analysis work.

Friends from Pakistan were also in attendance to share and learn from Indian experiences in tracking public expenditures. **Six representatives from Omar Ashgar Khan Development Foundation, Pakistan**, participated in the workshop.

Some of the common issues which were discussed as they relate to budget analysis work were:

- budget analysis vis-à-vis democracy;
- the budget process and governance;
- globalisation and government budget priorities; and
- effective use of government funds for the benefit of the poor.

Participants concurred that the exchange during the workshop was very fruitful and will help them strengthen their struggle for the rights of the poor through budget analysis. As a result it was decided that this workshop should become an annual event.

BARC Staff's Representation as Resource Persons in the Media and in Trainings/Seminars/Workshops Conducted by Other Organizations

The BARC staff members were invited as resource persons by several organizations during the reporting period. BARC staff participated in 22 trainings/workshops/seminars/media events as resource persons to talk about Budget Analysis, in events organized on a wide variety of topics -- like: "Asian Development Bank Funding for Projects in Rajasthan", "National Rural Health Mission", "Midday Meal Scheme", "Forest Produce", "HIV/AIDS and Gender Budgeting", "Female Foeticide", "Girls Education in the Muslim Community in Alwar", and "Child Trafficking".

Orientation of BARC Staff

In order to learn from others and to exchange views and experiences, every year the BARC staff visit other organisations. During the reporting period, **two BARC staff visited the National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS), Pune**, to expand knowledge about different advocacy strategies. Also, two BARC staff visited **the Centre for Budget and Governance and Accountability (CBGA)** in order to share and exchange our experience about budgets. Two BARC staff members participated in a workshop on **Budget Analysis and Advocacy in Cambodia on 21-31 October 2006** organised by the **International Budget Project, Washington**.

Micro Studies

Micro studies are conducted to make an assessment of the impact of the government policies and expenditures on the poor and marginalized people.

3 micro studies have been fully completed during the reporting period.

1. A micro study on **"tiny sector enterprises"** has been completed and data generated has been shared in the workshops organised by us. This study was carried out **to assess the impact of government policies and expenditures on the people associated with the tiny enterprise sector which is being adversely affected by globalisation**.
2. During the reporting period, we have finished data collection of another micro-study on **Different Welfare Schemes of the Government** in order to know the awareness level of the people about the schemes and to examine the impact of the schemes on the life of the poor people. This study was carried out in two districts – Bikaner and Nagaur. In data collection, help has been taken from Urmul Jyoti Sansthan, Nokha, Bikaner.

3. A micro study was carried out on **the services/facilities provided for the BPL (Below Poverty Line) people through the Public Distribution System (PDS) system** in Dausa district. The objective of the study was to examine whether the poor are receiving benefits through the PDS system.

Publications

Newsletter -

Our newsletter is a quarterly publication. During the reporting period, 5 issues of the newsletter have been brought out. Why five issues? The reason is that a special issue was brought out. The special issue was on the Calamity Relief Fund of Rajasthan.

It is known to all that in the last year Rajasthan's desert areas were heavily affected by flood. Lots of people and animals died in Barmer, Bikaner and Jaisalmer districts. Relief from the governments was not adequate and that created a very difficult situation for the people. Both the Central and State Governments were blaming each other on the matter of relief or, more to say, on the funding for relief. The Centre said, "We disbursed the funds but the State did not return us the proper accounts of earlier expenditures." The State said, "The Centre is not giving us money." But we felt that we need to see how much funding is there in the budget of the State Government under the head of calamity relief fund. And we found that there was a considerable amount of money in the budgets of the State Government. So, why they were not urgently spending the fund for the flood affected people? Thereafter, on an urgent basis we published a special issue of newsletter (of smaller size), pointing out the quarrels between the two governments while people were dying and, more importantly, the allocations of funds in the state budget for calamity relief were lying unused. Many people appreciated the publication of that issue and said that this has helped civil society organisations in negotiating with the government for early disbursement of funds for the affected region.

Usually, each issue of our newsletter is of four pages. 1,000 copies of each issue are published and they are distributed to the different NGOs, voluntary organizations, activists, the legislators, government departments as well as to directorates, bureaucrats, policy makers, research organizations, academicians, journalists, district level key persons, and freelance social workers.

Booklets – 5 Booklets were published in this period

1. In September 2006, we published a booklet on the "**Methodologies for Assessing Gender Budgeting**" in Hindi. These methodologies are suitable for the grassroot level organisations to examine whether or not village/district level budgets/spending are gender sensitive and gender inclusive.
2. In September 2006, we published another booklet (*BARC Working Paper No. 3*) entitled "**Crop Insurance in Rajasthan: The Need for Reform**". This publication was based on the primary data collected through micro-study.
3. There are a number of welfare schemes under several departments of the State Government. But people do not have information about the various schemes in a single booklet. One has to go through different departments' publications in order to search for information. To make the search easy, we have published a booklet which contains **detailed information of all the welfare schemes of four important departments**, namely Social Welfare Department, Rural Development Department, Panchayati Raj Department, and Food and Civil Supplies

Department. This publication has been brought out in Hindi and it has been jointly published by BARC and Urmul Jyoti Sanstha, Bikaner.

4. In February 2007, a publication (*BARC Working Paper No. 4*) has been brought out both in English and Hindi. The title of the booklet is: “**The Destitution of Widows in Rajasthan: What Role Has the State Played?**” This publication is also based on the primary data collected through a micro-study.
5. In March 2007, we have brought out another publication (*BARC Working Paper No. 5*) in Hindi entitled “**Expenditures on Social Services in Rajasthan**”. This publication is based on secondary data that are available in the government documents.
6. In addition, during the reporting period we have **reprinted** one of our earlier booklets. In January 2005, we had published one booklet in Hindi called “**Technical Terminologies of Budget.**” The copies of that booklet were almost exhausted. So, we reprinted it.

The Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre (BARC), as a Resource Unit started by Astha, has matured and spread its influence farther in the previous year.

PEOPLE'S EDUCATION AND CULTURE RESOURCE UNIT

It was planned to start a new Resource Unit in 2006-2007, called the People's Education and Culture Resource Unit. The crash, condensed, residential literacy programme that Astha has been running for several years was to be a part of the work of the new Unit, and in addition, the development of drama and puppetry teams to support the various social change Campaigns being worked on. However, due to certain reasons, the new Unit could not be started in full, and in this financial year under reporting, it was the Literacy work only which made up the work of this Resource Unit.

The Literacy Work

Astha has developed a three-phase literacy programme, crash, condensed, residential literacy programme for the leaders of People's Groups and Organizations who are illiterate. This course enables the participants to learn how to read and write in 20 days of training, and as a result of the discussions and case studies women into the course, they can also understand the socio-economic conditions of their own villages. The course is conducted in 3 Phases – Phase 1 of 10 days, in which the participants learn the basic alphabets and matras, how to put the letters and matras together into words and sentences, how to read and write, and how to count up to 100; Phase 2 and Phase 3 strengthen the reading and writing skills, and teach simple addition and subtraction of numbers. The course gives them skills to strengthen their leadership capacity, and many women tribal learders of People's Organizations in South Rajasthan have taken the course, and are now using literacy in their work. In the year 2006-2007, there were 6 campls of Phase 1 conducted (10 days each), and were attended by 140 participants, and 3 camps each of Phase 2 and 1 camp of Phase 3.

I Phase (10 days condensed course) 5 Course (Participants 35, 40, 15, 27, 23) Total 140

II Phase (5 days condensed course) 3 Course (Participants 8, 48, 21) Total 77

III Phase (5 days condensed course) 1 Course (Participants 38) Total 38

District-wise, Phase-wise Data of Literacy Program Attendance for 2006-2007

S.NO.	Name of Districts.	Participants in I Phase	Participants in II Phase	Participants in III Phase.
1.	Udaipur	62	31	15
2.	Jodhpur	6	4	3
3.	Jaisalmer	1	1	--
4.	Banswara	4	4	--
5.	Baran	6	--	--
6.	Chittorgarh	6	9	6
7.	Ajmer	13	7	5
8.	Rajsmad	15	--	--
9.	Pali	27	19	7
10.	Nagaur	--	2	-
11.	Dungarpur	--	-	2
	TOTAL	140	77	38

Literacy Course for Illiterate Elected Representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions

According to the 73rd constitutional amendment (33% reservation of women) the number of Women Elected Representatives in local self government bodies of the Panchayati Raj Institutions increased. But the literacy percentage of females in Rajasthan is comparatively and absolutely quite low (47% literacy). Due to this, they had to face many difficulties/ problems and aside from the other training Astha gave to the women elected representatives, it was decided to give them the opportunity to become literate as well.



A two-day state level workshop of elected representatives had been organized in March 2006. 44 representatives took part From 16 Districts and 28 organizations/associations. An implementation plan was prepared to help 1,542 women elected representatives to become literate. The plan was to cover 468 Gram Panchayats of 42 Panchayat Samiti of 16 districts with the help of 392 Instructors in their field areas. 13 camps have been organized in which 690 women elected representatives have become literate in this financial year, and the effort is continuing into 2007 – 2008. The model was: elected representatives and 3-4 other women would be taught in the villages by trained Instructors, and in this regard, 924 other women became literate.

Panchayati Raj Institutions Related Literacy Works During 2006-2007.

Number of Training of Trainers - 18

Number of Instructors – 392

Number of Women Elected Representatives. – 690

Number of other Women – 924

Organizations Associated with this Literacy Effort - 17

Rajshree Kala Sansthan, Rajsmand	Surabhi Seva Sansthan Rel Magra, Rajsmand
Prayas Seva Sansthan, Shahpura, Bhilwara	Asha Kiran Sansthan, Aasind, Gangapur, Bhilwara
SSD, Karauli	SRKPS, Jhunjhunu
Karmath Sansthan, Kherwara, Udaipur	Vanvasi Vikas Sansthan, Kolyari, Jhadol, Udaipur
Adrash Shiksha Samiti, Salumber, Udaipur	Magra Mewar Sansthan, Jawaja, Ajmer.
Unnati, Jodhpur	Jan Chetana Sansthan, Abu Road, Sirohi
Upkar Sansthan, Alwar	Sambal Vikas Sansthan, Sarada, Udaipur.
DVMS, Dausa	GRAVIS, Jodhpur
Astha Sansthan, Udaipur	

Aagaz Academy and Literacy

In collaboration with Aagaz Academy, Astha organized a training camp for 64 women elected representatives of Rajsamand and Sirohi districts. It was a 21-day training module spread over 3 phases in a one-year period. The I and II phase had been implemented earlier and the III phase was organized from 16 – 22 May 2006. For those representatives who were not able to take part in either of the II or III phase training camps, a bridge course was organized from 30th June to 2nd July 2006. As a regular part of the training programmes, everyday the women had a class for 1 ½ hours and they also practiced at home. From among them, 20 women elected representatives have learnt to read and write, 15 are of slightly lesser skills, and can identify words after looking at pictures. The remaining women were already literate. Great awareness has developed among the elected representatives as a result of the literacy work.



THE GLOBALIZATION RESOURCE UNIT

The Astha Team, in working at the grassroots with the people, strongly feels that the globalized, privatized economic policies that have been adopted by the Central and the State governments, are very much a part of the root causes of poverty and deprivation. We see machines replacing labourers in road construction, factories, we see agriculture and small marginal farmers getting no attention of the government, we see the deterioration and demoralization in the Public Distribution System, in the health systems, in the education systems. Inflation in all items, including basic food grains and vegetables, dals and fruits puts ordinary food items beyond the reach of so many. Imported manufactured items, export of food items, migrating labour in search of work, new VAT taxes since India's economy is booming, big – but the disparity between the rich and the poor is getting even wider. Not all are benefiting from these liberalized, privatized, globalized economic policies – the numbers of the poor are growing.

But the Astha Team know that alone, we can do nothing about these policies. At the grassroots, we can work with the people to make a success of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act works, the first solid “safety net” for the poor that the government has put in place, and it too is still tentatively taking its first steps in many states – in a few Districts, with a few civil works. Or Astha can help to link migrant labourers to support structures in the places to which they go. Or to help to make organized voices vocal about the problems in the PDS or School Lunch programmes. This work we are doing, and have done in the last year.

But the Policies themselves are a problem for the poor. Work on changing those policies, to get new priorities into state and national budgets and policies, is a hard thing to do. The forces supporting the consumerist, privatized, “bigger is better” approaches are strong and powerful. However, Astha has worked in a number of ways in the last year:

1. Attending the General Assembly of the South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) in Kathmandu Nepal, June 31 – July 4, 2006. At this time, it was decided to form a Core Committee that would act like an Executive for SAAPE, and give leadership and take responsibility to get things done. Astha's Coordinating Director has been associated with SAAPE since the beginning, and although she felt she did not have the time to be a member of the Core Committee, it was agreed that selected founding members of SAAPE would be invited to all Core Committee meetings as “invitees” and so Astha remains associated closely with SAAPE.
2. The organization of SAAPE is around Thematic Groups, and one of the Thematic Groups is “Gender”. Astha is the Focal Organization for India for the Gender Thematic Group. In this connection, Astha attended the Regional Gender Group meeting held in New Delhi.
3. India Social Forum (ISF) was organised in Delhi on 9-13 November 2006. Many of the People's Organizations sent delegates to the Forum, to learn about the macro policies influencing the region. About 50 P.O. representatives attended. BARC representatives also participated in the India Social Forum.

CURRENT ISSUES

While “Current Issues” is not in itself a “Resource Unit”, nevertheless, Astha has made provision to respond to some current issues that may not have been planned at the time of drawing up the programme proposal, and which at the present time do not form the focus of a full-fledged Resource Unit.

In this previous year, action was taken by the Astha Team in relation to 3 such issues: Communal Harmony, Female Foeticide, and building writers’ and journalists’ perspective through a Writers Workshop.

Communal Harmony:

After the Godra massacres in Gujarat, Astha formed a Communal Harmony Forum (Sadbhavna Manch) with other voluntary organizations, independent and respected citizens and social workers of Udaipur district to work towards maintaining social harmony in Southern Rajasthan. In Astha's opinion, once we come together, we can counter the forces, which want to divide us. In order to prevent communal disharmony in the region, and to bring people together on a secular platform, the Communal Harmony Forum worked through meetings, workshops and rallies. It initiated the creation of human chains for harmony; it worked to reduce tensions at festivals and celebrated festivals of all faith in Udaipur and nearby areas.

Astha played a central role in lectures and discussions on communal issues organized by the Forum, with resource persons, including Syed Hammed, Asgar Ali Engineer, Medha Patkar and Aruna Roy. The Forum networked with similar groups – including Aman Biradari at the National level to ensure that what happened in Gujarat is not repeated in Rajasthan. Astha's efforts are guided by its belief that in a democracy, people of all faiths have the right to live in peace and harmony, and it is only when society makes efforts to insure this, will communal harmony be a reality.

Workshop on Communal Harmony:

A workshop was organized at the Astha Training Centre on 31 July and 1 August, 2006, in collaboration with Aman Biradari, New Delhi, the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Sadbhavna Manch (Forum), Udaipur. In this workshop, Mr. Harsh Vardhan, Supreme Court Commissioner on Food Security, participated with us in making plans for communal harmony in Rajasthan. The formation of a network that would be committed to vanguard the struggle against growing communalism and fundamentalism, and to establish peace, harmony and gender justice in Rajasthan, was discussed. A Campaign Coordination Group emerged with the membership of 17 volunteers in Rajasthan. These resource volunteer members came forward to shoulder the responsibility to actualize the Amanbiradari Campaign at the grassroots. The following strategies were adopted in their respective working areas:

- Organizing youth and women to take actions to build communal harmony and peace, justice and challenge the communal practices
- Interventions with educational institutions / children
- Legal Interventions - Understanding the discrimination and atrocities / taking up of independent enquiries and organized fact-findings / filing PIL cases against hate campaigning / supporting victims etc.
- Organize educative trainings, workshops and events with Aman Biradari volunteers, to demystify the hate campaigning against minorities, and to counter

communal propaganda. These political trainings also build perspectives of secular, democratic citizenship functions.

To get visibility for the secular forces, it was proposed to have a long-term sustained intensive Campaign for at least a 5-year period.

In order to discuss the strategies at the state level, and to discuss how this network of Friends of Aman Biradari would work, a meeting was held on September 15, 2006 at the Astha Office, Udaipur. In this meeting, 16 members from different organizations participated. The agenda of the meeting was:

1. To discuss the structure and functioning of this network
2. To discuss the response to the decisions decided at the workshop of the respective organizations, and to hear about their planning to achieve those targets
3. Planning of state level activities
4. Discuss the logistics and needed financial resources for the initiatives and activities
5. Establishing an Aman-Kosh
6. Identifying more volunteers
7. Developing different teams to work at the grass root level i.e. villages and sensitive areas identified by different organizations.
8. Planning campaigns at school and college level all over the state.
9. Other agenda items were also discussed that emerged through discussions at the meeting.

During the meeting, 10 villages were selected where initiatives would be taken to establish peace, harmony and gender-justice to curb the dangerous poison of communalism and fundamentalism.

Female Foeticide:

The killing of women exists in various forms in societies the world over. However, Indian society displays some unique and particularly brutal versions, such as dowry deaths and sati. Female foeticide is an extreme manifestation of violence against females. Female foetuses are selectively aborted after pre-natal sex determination, thus avoiding the birth of girls. As a result of selective abortion, between 35 and 40 million girls and women are missing from the Indian population! In Rajasthan, the sex ratio of girls to boys in some Districts has dropped to less than the state average of 922 : 1,000.

Alarmed over the growing incidents of female foeticide in Udaipur city, there was public outcry when 3 female foetuses were found in Fatehsagar Lake! The media described this as a "blot" on the society and there were calls for concerted efforts to end this evil practice. A rally was organized to make people aware about the issue, and participants came from nearby Districts to raise their voices. The determination of the sex of the foetus by ultrasound scanning is common in Udaipur. No moral or ethical principle supports such a procedure for gender identification. The situation is further worsened by the indifferent attitude of governments and medical professionals. In India, the available legislation for prevention of sex determination needs strict implementation, alongside the launching of programmes aimed at altering attitudes, including those prevalent in the medical profession.

A citizen's workshop was organized at the Commissioner office in which some academicians, lawyers, NGO representatives, students and enlightened people participated. The Government was given memorandum drafted at the workshop, that female foeticide must be stopped, the

members of the District monitoring Committee needed to be replaced with more active citizens and officials, and action must be taken against the people / doctors / clinics found guilty.

The sex ratio has altered consistently in favour of boys since the beginning of the 20th century. Worryingly, the trend is far stronger in urban rather than rural areas, and among literate rather than illiterate women, exploding the myth that growing affluence and spread of basic education alone will result in the erosion of gender bias.

Writer's Convention:

The writer's convention was held on 20-21 January, 2007 at the Agricultural College Auditorium in Udaipur (Rajasthan). 170 writers with similar views and like-minded people, who think about social issues, participated in the convention.

In the 2-day convention, senior journalists and thinker Shri Prabhush Joshi said that imperialism increases differences and by using the instruments of technology, imperialism is spreading its arms and Indian Capitalism is helping in this expansion. In the convention, the writers and journalists raised their voices against Imperialism, Globalization and Capitalism. On this occasion, Professor Nand Chaturvedi, renowned poet and writer of Udaipur, was honoured with the "Equality Writer Award". In the convention both the issues - Marxist and Gandhian philosophies were discussed, and both were found to be against Consumerism.

Writers from all over the country talked to the media saying that the media must create an environment where people develop resistance to Imperialism and the public should be made aware of social issues, rather than just fed entertainment by the media.



THE PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORT SOCIETY RESOURCE UNIT

Over the last 15-20 years, Astha has brought into being 8 People's Organizations – some centred around issues, some covering a certain geographical area. The People's Organizations Resource Unit has been working with these 8 People's Organizations and their Support Societies⁹ to strengthen them and bring them to greater maturity, strength and self-sufficiency. The Unit has strengthened the leadership of the Organizations, by conducting training programmes, camps and other activities. The P.O. leaders have increased their management capacities and skills of program planning and implementation of plans made. Because of these interventions, the Peoples' Organizations and Support Societies have moved closer to becoming independent and self-directing organizations. The Unit staff also conducts regular monthly meetings with the leaders of the 8 P.O.s and these meetings are problem-solving meetings, in which the Astha staff provides guidance and facilitates the process of planning the way forward.

Major Objectives of the Unit --

- Astha is working to bring into being Organizations that can stand on their own feet -- Organizations of the poor whose leaders and members are aware, who are aware of the rights of citizens of India, aware of resources, aware laws and structures, and can bring about changes in their conditions of poverty and marginalization. Astha is working to strengthen such organizations of the poor and organizations working with and for the poor.
- To guide and support the Adivasi Peoples' Organizations' leadership to be involved in raising funds for the work of their Organizations.
- To enable the P.O. Unit workers themselves to develop patterns of learning new things so they can keep giving new and appropriate information to the people, and can continue to guide them in the process of building strong and effective Associations.
- To bring into being Networks of Peoples' Organizations which will work together to solve common and shared problems.
- To help the 8 Peoples' Organizations that are presently formed, to become much more self-sufficient in leadership, decision-making, fund-raising, problem solving and strategizing.

Highlights of the Work of the P.O. Resource Unit --

(a) Training for Self - Reliance

The P.O. Resource Unit has trained members of the Support Societies, and key leaders from the P.O.s in how to move towards less dependence on Astha, and become more self-sufficient. There have been 3 training events of 3 or 4 days each, and all of the People's Organizations / Support Societies have been trained. The Unit has trained members from their executives and workers in how to get local resources and funds, and they have been given capacity building and management skills for different kinds of work. They have conducted 3 kinds of training programs -- one, is legal training; the second is for proposal writing and funding sources; and the third is for finance management training. This Unit's major

⁹ Support Society – A registered Society that has a relatively small membership, formed mostly of members of the People's Organization for which it was formed to "Support". The People's Organizations all remain unregistered organizations, for reasons of flexibility and autonomy. But sometimes, the P.O. may need to have a legal entity which can help it to do something it wants to do e.g. take a training programme from the government, purchase land for an office, raise funds. And so, the P.O. and Support Society combination.

objective is to strengthen the leadership of the People's Organizations and Support Societies, so that they can independently manage their Organization in the future. These trainings are helpful for self-reliance as they start practicing what they learn in their People's Organizations.

Details of some of the training programmes were:

- (i) Legal Aid Course/Training – This was organized for the leaders of the Organizations who would play a major role in guiding people about legal aspects of issue action, and deal with Government departments, agencies and speak on behalf of the P.O. in an effective manner. Two training programmes were held from 17-20 December, 2006 and 24-25 February, 2007 at the Astha Training Centre. In the first training programme, 30 participants were there and 32 in the next workshop. The objectives of the training were to provide information about the police and legal structure and it's working, to make them aware of Labour laws and the Indian Constitution. Also, selected topics related to Criminal and Revenue laws, and the Migrant Labour Act were also dealt with.

- (ii) Organization Management and Project Framing- A training was organized from 26-28 October 2006, to increase capacity to develop projects, to identify the opportunities for getting projects and to generate and raise funds. 14 members participated in the training programme.



- iii) Finance Management Training- Finance Management Training was provided from 16-18 October 2006 to the people working with the Support Societies and People's Organizations to develop accounts skills. To train them to plan and prepare financial rules and regulations for the proper functioning of the organization to make the supporting registered organization understand the importance of Income Tax regulations¹⁰ 12A, 80G, PAN, and Audit procedures. The capacity building training programmes enables the leaders to maintain the accounts for membership and donations, which they are collecting, and to record transactions on their own.

Maturity and Self-Sufficiency of the P.O. – An Example of the Direction

The Unit has helped the Rajsamand Women's Forum to get funding from the State Government Health Department directly into their bank account for a Family Counseling Centre. The Rajsamand Women's Forum has gotten funding for this financial year. The Kotra Adivasi Sansthan has written a proposal and gotten support for the "migrant labourers registration center"

¹⁰ 12A is Income Tax Exemption because of the fact that the work is of a charitable nature
80G registration provides the registered Society with a number that can be put on receipts of donations to the Support Society, and which will allow the donor to claim 50% income tax exemption for his/her donation. And PAN stands for Permanent Account Number, for the Society registered with the Income Tax Department. All necessary for managing a Support Society well.

they operate, on the border with Gujarat. Other linkages with Indian funding sources have been made for the People's Organizations, with the help of the P.O. Resource Unit.

(b) The Forum of Leaders of All the People's Organizations

For the past several years, there have been big meetings 4 times a year, of the Leadership Groups (*Sanchalak Mandals*) of all the People's Organizations that Astha has helped to form. There have been four 2-day meetings of this group in the period under reporting. Help is given by one organization to another. Activities done together are planned – such as sending delegates to the Indian Social Forum in New Delhi, and taking part in the Social Audit “homework” for the NREGA Social Audit held February 2007 in 11-Gram Panchayats of each of the 11 Blocks of Udaipur District.

This meeting is also used for monitoring the effectiveness of the work of the Organization, and assessing their progress, as well as sharing common issues and planning for future collective efforts on common issues. The different Resource Units come and share information. The meeting is a time of strategic planning together with all People's Organizations. A P.O. person on a rotational basis chairs the meetings. The meetings enabled the P.O. leaders to increase their leadership qualities in the meeting, and learn new things.

(c) Preparation for the High Court PIL about the Rajasthan PESA Legislation Rules

The TSR Court Case Preparation: This Resource Unit has worked with the 2 Gram/Gaon Sabhas of Tribal Self Rule village republics which are joining Astha in filing the case against the Government of Rajasthan for not framing Rules for the Rajasthan PESA legislation passed in 1999. In this reporting period, the papers have been finalized, signed, the Jodhpur High Court Lawyer is ready, and is backed up by a Delhi Supreme Court lawyer and his team. Now, the strategy is to wait for a particular judge who will be more understanding of the case rather than less understanding. The issue is, that the Rajasthan PESA legislation is inoperable until there are Rules – the whole State Act says things like: “the Gram Sabha has authority over minor forest produce (and minor minerals, and minor water bodies, and money lending, and liquor, etc. etc.) according to Rules”. And there are no Rules! 2007 is 8 years after 1999 when the Act was passed by the Rajasthan Assembly.

(d) UNDP Project With Selected P.O.s -

The People's Organizations Resource Unit works to support 2 of the People's Organizations – the Tribal Development Forum in Kotra Block, Udaipur District, and the Tribal Women's Awareness Society in Jhadol and Girwa Blocks of Udaipur District, in the implementation of the UNDP funded project: “Social Mobilization Through Natural Resource Management”. Review meetings are held monthly. Physical and Financial reports are provided to UNDP quarterly. Site selection for physical works, estimation, design, technical support is provided by a civil engineer associated with the Resource Unit. The Resource Unit handles the reporting in English to UNDP, and places one person in the field with the P.O. to strengthen the implementation work.¹¹

(e) Farmer's Loan Issue-

¹¹ More information about the actual work on the ground of this UNDP supported project work is to be found in the reporting of the two P.O.s involved.

The issue that has come to light is, that some of the banks are over-recovering the agriculture loans made to small farmers. The loans have long since been repaid, but the farmer keeps getting notices from the bank about the next installment, and this situation is intentional and planned, and not a clerical mistake on the part of the banks. With the organization and awareness of the People's Organizations, and armed with the Right to Information Act, a methodology has been developed to stop this exploitation of simple and poorly educated farmers. The Unit organized a workshop on the Farmers Loan Issue on 17-18 October, 2006, in which 36 representatives from 13 Voluntary Organizations participated. The objective was to open up this issue and develop an understanding of accounts, learn how to take relevant accounts details from the bank, and analyze these to move forward with the support of the law for loans.

Demands of Small / Marginal Farmers About Bank Loans

- Compound interest must be converted to Simple Interest
- Interest on loans should be reduced
- Farmers should not be sent to Prison or have their land and property auctioned in case they are not able to pay back the loan amount
- The interest charged should not be more than the principle amount taken

India is mainly an agricultural country and the greater part of its population lives in villages. Agriculture is the backbone of the rural economy and due to illiteracy, exploitation, poverty, the small farmer seems always doomed to debt. There are three devils for the agriculturist i.e. drought, debt and death-feasts (*Mrityubhoj*) and these keep him poor:

-----The Indian Farmer-----

-born in	D	-dawns in	D
-burns in	E	-dwells in	E
-buried in	B	-dies in	B
	T		T

Debt is his life as well as his death. Thus from the birth to death he remains in debt. Debt is his life partner and the moneylenders and estate holders have been his permanent exploiters. Indebtness has been a constant and all pervading problem since time immemorial. Money-lenders and Banks – both exploit.

Although the People's Organizations at their own level, take the accounts from the bank, analyze them, and take up the process of enquiry and redressal, but the main aim is also to raise the issue at the National Level (Farmer's Prestige or Image Forum – *Kisan Pratistha Manch*).

(f) Networking and Lobbying --

Members of the Peoples' Organizations have played a major role in several current issues at the State and National levels. Astha and members of the Peoples' Organizations have worked a lot on the Bill that was before Parliament, of the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, to press for the passing of the Forest Rights Bill, and for the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The P.O. Resource Unit has worked hard to prepare the grassroots for right implementation of the NREGA, and to take part in strategic rallies and Sit-Ins for the Forest Rights Bill. The Unit has begun to raise the credit and loan issue to the state and national level through the Farmer's Prestige Forum. The Resource Unit, structurally and on issues, has enabled the People's Organizations to

network and lobby, which has strengthened their own issues, and strengthened the Movements and Campaigns with which they have been associated.

(g) Monitoring and Evaluation --

The Unit takes part in monthly meetings from time to time for monitoring and evaluation of the leaders of the Peoples' Organizations.

(h) Publications --

The Unit publishes

1. HALKARA, the quarterly newsletter of the People's Organizations that raises the voices of People Organizations and shares their work. The newsletter is shared among the P.O's and others who are working in same field.
2. Information on Important Laws - a booklet was published for the social worker/activists who provide legal support to the People's Organizations.
3. An Organization Management booklet for NGO workers and P.O. leaders on how to manage a registered Society.

A Manual for NGO's working with registered Societies, and needing financial support from funding agencies, giving information about project grants and formalities

PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS

1. The Tribal Development Forum (Adivasi Vikas Manch)
2. The Tribal Women's Awareness Society (Adivasi Mahila Jagriti Samiti)
3. Rajsamand Women's Forum (Rajsamand Mahila Manch)
4. Jarga Area Development Society (Jarga Kshetriya Vikas Samiti)
5. Vagad Labourers and Farmers Organization (Vagad Mazdoor Kisan Sangathan)
6. Gordward Tribal Organization (Gordward Adivasi Sangathan)
7. The Association of Strong Women Alone (Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan)
8. The Rajasthan Forest Produce Collectors and Processors Groups Support Society – or – "The Support Society" for short (Samarthak Samiti)

THE TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM (Adivasi Vikas Manch)

In Kotra Block of Udaipur District, in the late 1980's and early 1990's, several issue-based struggle committees were formed to undertake rights based campaigns in the area. All these struggle committees were working on their own issues. Astha had the vision to unite the people struggling in the Block, and have a mass based organization in Kotra Block. So, all the struggle committees were integrated into one Forum in 1993, as "The Tribal Development Forum" ("Adivasi Vikas Manch").

Later, Astha strategized to form a small registered organization to support the work of the un-registered mass-membership People's Organization, and the Support Society of the Tribal Development Forum is named "Kotra Adivasi Society" ("Kotra Adivasi Sansthan" – KAS), a registered Society under the Societies Registration Act. The Kotra Adivasi Society was set up in October 1998 as the support organization for the mass-based Peoples' Organization. As a registered body, KAS raises funds and takes projects, which the Adivasi Vikas Manch/Tribal Development Forum wants to implement in the area. The Forum is working in Kotra and Jhadol Blocks of Udaipur District, and in Pindwara Block in Sirohi District. The membership covers 368 villages. There are 25 tribal men and women leaders in the Core Committee of the Forum. The membership is of 6,515 people.

Major Objectives --

- To make the adivasi people organized into the Tribal Development Forum, capable of handling their problems independently, including keeping control over the natural resources necessary for livelihood and their way of life.
- Development of leadership in the Organization or Sangathan.
- Formation of its Block Level and Regional Level committees that work on widespread and larger issues.
- Help the tribal villages of this Schedule V Area understand the benefits of Tribal Self Rule, and work towards more villages proclaiming their village as a Village Republic, which will bring into effect the legal provisions of the Tribal Self Rule legislation (PESA).
- Awakening the Gram Sabhas (Village Assemblies) about their capabilities and powers in promoting the Tribal Self Rule processes.
- Take up project work that will improve the land of the people of the area, and will strengthen and diversify their livelihood base.

Major Activities During the Year

(A) Migrant Labour Support Work

(a) Registration and Identity Cards -- The Tribal Development Forum, (based in Kotra Block which borders Sabarkanta District of

Gujarat), has established a Migrant Labour Support Unit. This Unit is a place where migrant Labourers can register their details, and be issued an identity card. In the past year, a total of 942 people were registered and 511 identity cards were made. The card helps them in Gujarat, in relation to Police harassments and there are also other uses for their identity card. This card is also helping them to contact like-minded Organizations and trade unions, which help them in emergencies, and take up their cases of exploitation in wages, and other things.

(b) Migrant Labour for Contract Farming -- 3,225 Labourers have been identified who migrate for contract farming. About 9,000 families migrate.

(c) Capacity Building Training: Recognizing that large numbers of men and families will migrate out of the area in search of employment, one strategy is to help them to get more skills that are needed in the larger world, so that they may earn more money when they migrate. 45 people have been associated with different training programmes and employment like making bricks, making statues, Hotel service jobs (as waiters, housekeepers, etc.), carpentry, masonry, etc. and their placement was done.

(d) 30 cases were filed, out of these 14 cases were solved, 8 cases are under process. Till now compensation of Rs. 35,774/- has been provided to the labourers who were given less payment of wages. 400 kg grains were provided in the form of compensation – the Gujarat land owner, for whom the migrating Kotra labourers had worked, were underpaid, and as a result of the struggle, the land owner paid the labourers 400 kg. of grains as payment for work done.

(B) Forest Land Homesteads

The Forest Land People's Movement was very active up to December 2006, in mobilizing grass root support of adivasis to show support for the Bill. The tribals of Kotra, Jhadol and Pindwara Blocks associated with the Forum, went to Udaipur (the Divisional Headquarters, and also the Headquarters of the Tribal Development Commissioner). They also went in large numbers to Delhi to join the mass demonstrations. The tribal leaders spoke at the demonstrations. The next struggle will be to get the newly passed Recognition of Forest Rights Act implemented!

In anticipation of the Forest Rights Act being passed, those who had not earlier prepared their Land Files were helped to do so, by leaders of the Adivasi Development Forum. There are 3,850 families whose homestead lands are on what is now Forest Land, and for these families, the Forum leaders are preparing the files with evidence of long-term occupation. More than 645 files have been completed.

(C) Employment

NREGA - National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, a serious safety net for the unemployed in rural areas. This central government scheme is outlined in the "Livelihood Resource Unit" section of this report. Awareness about the Employment Guarantee scheme was spread throughout the area by the Tribal Development Forum. There were training programmes to help the people understand the scheme completely and panchayat level Gram Sabhas were organized to make job cards and register people. Applications for work for 5,489 people were given and they were provided jobs within 15 days.

Social Audit of NREGA Works in Kotra Block

A Social Audit of NREGA works in Kotra Block was undertaken with NGOs and the Administration. The Forum, with Astha's help, conducted the NREGA Social Audit Padyatra from 11-15 June, 2006 in 31 Gram Panchayats and 168 villages, and 150 people from Kotra block participated. It was found that in 36 villages, the job cards of 520 people

are still not ready. 90% of the job cards have been made and distributed, but still at some places, the Panchayats have not distributed them to the people. Application forms have not been given to people and they have no receipt. Fake attendance has been marked and less people were found to be working in the area than the figure on the Muster rolls. Wages were not given on time, and less payment was done. People had no information about the amount sanctioned for the work allotted. No inspection was done by the administration at the workplace. Arrangements for shade and medical facilities were not available. There was a problem of transparency.

The leaders of the Social Audit held a meeting with the BDO, and discussions about these matters were held with the collector. He gave orders to the BDO and Program Officer to put things right. The result was that payment was made to the labourers, and application for work forms were provided to the people in the Gram Panchayats. The people became more aware of the scheme. 75% families got 100 days job till February 2007 and 25% families got employment for 60-75 days. The awareness about the scheme has developed among people -- they file an application for employment, do the task or daily work based on measurement, and get the work on time. The whole area resounded with the zeal of effective implementation of the Act.

(D) Food Security

The Tribal Development Forum worked on improved functioning of the Public Distribution System shops (PDS) and other assisted schemes like Annapurna and Antodaya. Seed Banks, and grain banks were promoted.

(E) Tribal Self Rule

There are 57 Tribal Self Rule villages in the area where the Tribal Development Forum works. The Village Assemblies (Gram/Gaon Sabhas) of TSR villages have started solving the internal fights at the village level. The Gram/Gaon Sabha of villages - Pipli Kheda, Chambua, Ambal and Torna, have undertaken the protection and control of forests in their hands. They are working for the protection and development of minor forest produce and their rights over them. A tax is being charged by the Gram/Gaon Sabha on some mineral products like stone, sand etc.

(F) Right to Information

The poor have been hesitant in implementing the Right to Information. The members of the Forum used the Right to Information in solving regional and personal problems. They also use it when necessary to get information about the NREGA.

Use of the Right to Information Act

- (a) During this year, it was discovered that some people who had taken loans from the Land Development Bank (Bhumi Vikas Bank) and the Punjab National Bank, were being cheated. Their accounts records were not proper. Applications were filed under the Right to Information Act. Till now, 95 families got the photocopy of their accounts, which is being analysed.
- (b) During this year, the new lists for Below Poverty Line families were compiled, and awareness was spread by the Forum about the procedures of getting a family's name on the list, and how to ask for corrections of mistakes. Under the Right to Information Act, an application was filed with the Block Level Council (Panchayat Samiti), Kotra, to provide the BPL lists published. 500 poor families who did not have their names on the list, appealed collectively to the SDM on the 17th of November 2006. The submissions are still "pending" and "under consideration".

(G) UNDP Project Work

(a) Tribal Development Forum, in partnership with Astha, is working on a project supported by UNDP, **titled: Social Mobilization Through Natural Resource Management**. Effective implementation of the UNDP project nation-wide, will strengthen the capacity of 5,000 women's groups. With the work of the Tribal Development Forum, the project will strengthen 34 women's groups from poor and marginalized communities to undertake natural resource management and thereby improve their access to sustainable livelihoods.

(b) Women Organize SHG's (Self Help Groups) and Federate Them --

At present there are 34 SHG's. Regular SHG meetings are held, and Cluster Meetings are held once a month, where the representatives of the SHGs meet. These are review meetings, and monitor the progress of the SHGs and the representatives plan for the future. SHG women gave 15 proposals to the Tribal Development Forum, which forwarded the applications to the concerned departments, and one of the results was that 11 handpumps were installed!

Capacity Building of SHGs --

- 5 women leaders of the SHGs participated in the literacy programme organized by Astha.
- **SHG management training:** A leadership and management skill training was organized for the members of 9 SHG's which had been given a revolving fund for income generating activities. The training programme was held the 16-17 February, 2007. 25 women, both leaders and members of the SHGs, participated in the training. The objective of the training was to impart training on managing Revolving Funds and to enhance understanding of financial transactions. 9 groups have been provided a revolving fund of Rs.2,10,000 which the groups are managing collectively.

(c) Women's Empowerment:

- **Village Fund:** The "Gram Kosh" has been established by the federation of 22 villages as a fund for emergencies, and to provide a fund for basic requirements when needed. At present Rs.13,15,750/- has been collected.
- **Grain Bank:** To off-set the adverse conditions like drought or any other natural calamity, grain banks have been established. A total of 22,000 kg of grains are in reserve for these 22 villages.

In the year 2006 due to heavy rainfall, the crop was destroyed. The people were provided relief from the seed bank. Grains were sold as packages of seeds and that generated income.

(d) Income Generating Activities

Self Help Groups have started some income generating activities. These activities include: collecting and marketing non-timber Minor Forest Produce (MFP) like honey, gum, palash, custard apple, and non-edible oil seeds. The Adivasi Development Forum has purchased a "Dal Machine" which can increase the sale value of the lentil, "tur" or "arhar" and making it into "dal" by processing the whole seeds into split and cleaned dal. Vermi composting has been begun in one village name Viyol on a large scale; the people use the vermi-compost produced on their fields to increase the land fertility and increased the crop yields.

- **Honey Collection:** Total Profit was Rs. 26,100 earned by 4 groups- Nada, Kaucha, Malvan Fala, Kabadia Fala - by selling 870 kg Honey @ Rs. 80 / Kg. (Cost Price – Rs. 50 /Kg)
- **Moong Dal (Pulse) Processing:** Total Profit earned by 2 groups, Hadmat and Viyol, was – Rs. 6,000/- by selling 6 quintals of moong dal (pulse) @ Rs. 45/Kg (Cost Price Rs. 35/Kg)
- **Tuar Dal (Arhar):** Total Profit earned by 6 Groups- Morchucha, Mamer, Gura Tahal Fala, Viyol, Padalwada, Kaucha was – Rs. 40,500/- By selling 8,100 kg. of Tuar dal (Arhar) @ Rs. 19/kg (Cost Price Rs. 14/kg).
- **Palash (*Butea Monosperma*):** Total Profit earned by Viyol SHG was a Net Profit – Rs. 1,000/- by selling 250 kg of Palash @ Rs. 6/Kg (Cost Price Rs. 2/Kg).
- **Gum:** Profit earned by 1 Gram Panchayat (Viyol) was Rs. 1,600/- by selling 100 kg. of Gum @ Rs. 30/kg (Cost Price Rs. 14/Kg).



Village Viyol is located in Kotra block of Udaipur district, a poor village due to poor agricultural production and most of the earned income was spent on alcohol by the men, leaving the women unable to fulfill the basic needs of the family.

Initiative

The women of Viyol got together to form a Self-Help Group, and they called it “The Adivasi Women’s Savings Group”

Success

With the support of the Tribal Development Forum and Astha, this group started to work on the problem of poor agricultural production. They constructed an earthen dam (nadi), and did contour terracing of their hillside lands (med bandi). The dam enabled farmers to water their crops, and the terracing helped the soil and water conservation, and helped in having better crops.

They also did vermiculture composting (using earthworms in compost beds). Initially they tried vermicomposting on a small scale, at the home of Kadani Bai who was president of the women’s group, but after positive feedback, all 12 women of the group tried this. As a result, the group sold worms worth Rs.2,700 at the rate of Rs.300 per kg and also sold compost at the rate of Rs.3 per kg.

This group took a loan amount of Rs. 20,000 from Kotra Adivasi Sansthan, and from this amount, they purchased some local products like tuar dal, mung dal, channa dal, khakde ka papad from local market and sold these purchased products at higher prices in towns and cities. They followed the principle of revolving funds, and the borrowed amount was returned back to Kotra Adivasi Sansthan, and the profit was kept with them.

Looking ahead

In future, group want to prepare proposals for making roads, a school, a check dam etc. Thus Adivasi Women’s Savings Group has proved to be a miracle for the villagers and for village

development too. Of course – the problem of the men’s alcohol consumption remains a problem to be dealt with!!

(e) Women's access to and management of land and water resources improved

Awareness was raised amongst women regarding land rights, and men were convinced regarding the need for the role of women in decision-making.

(f) Organic Farming

The vermicompost units that were initially given to the women have multiplied to 146 beds or units. The women are using the compost manure in their fields and thus have saved the cost of around Rs. 1040 which they did not have to use in buying commercial fertilizer for their crops. Women are also selling the extra vermicompost fertilizer to the nearby farmers.

(g) Pasture land development

The women were mobilized to develop the common wasteland for the pastureland development and they have taken responsibility of protecting the common land developed.

(h) Enhanced Access to and Management of Water Bodies

There have been many water harvesting structures constructed under this project in the period under reporting, increasing access to and management of water bodies.

A PRA¹² was conducted to select sites for the water bodies to be constructed. These exercises turned out to be very useful in creating an alternative database of the village by the local people. People drew maps of their villages and located sites for the new the water bodies according to the needs and access to different groups, thus facilitating the identification of needs, problems and solutions. These maps helped in prioritizing and preparing plans of action. The part played by the decentralized development actors i.e. the members of the project team, was of asking questions, being patient listeners, and motivating people to participate by accepting and respecting their knowledge.



¹² PRA – Participatory Rural Appraisal, a rural development approach to involve village people in planning improvements for their village

Kotra Adivasi Sansthan, Kotra

Sr. No	Name of work	Name of village	Quantity	Benifited Families	Total area benifited (big)	Well recharge	Total mandays gen.
1	Anicut	Morchuchha, Padalwada, Nichla thala, Kaucha, Dingawari, Bilwan, Malwan, Kabadia(Upli subri), Nichali subri,	10	184	177	36	7,364
2	Well recharging structure	Kaucha, Morchuchha	2	12	40.5		
3	Pasture land development	Upli subri, Upli subri, Morchuchha, Nichla thala, Nada, Nada, Mehar, Gujania	8	154	316		9,018

(i) Health camp

Two health camps were planned, but looking at the outbreak of diseases, 3 camps were organized in Padalwada, Nada and Gura. Total 495 people benefited from these camps.

Women and children were given medical checkup and medicines. In case of complexities the women were also referred to block/district level health centres or hospitals.



Families were sensitized on women's needs for food, nutrition and health issues.

One training of Dais (traditional mid-wives) was undertaken, although more were planned. The dais turned out in very large number. 33 dais attended from 21 villages.

(j) Non- Formal Education

Two Awareness Generation Camps, one at the cluster and one at the Block level were organized. Women's groups were educated regarding the issue of children's education. Shortly afterwards, training was provided to 10 teachers for Non-Formal Education and 10 NFE centers are being run. There are a total of 540 students in the NFE centers.

One Girls' Camp (Balika Shivar) was held. Door to door contact was done with 120 families, who were encouraged to send their daughters to participate in the Girls' Camp. As a result 70 girls participated in the Camp.

One Children's Fair (Bal Mela) was also organized by KAS.

And one training was provided to adolescent girls on Reproductive and Child Health.

Why should there be any limit to moving ahead...

To get education for children was a great problem in Malwan village (Upli Subari cluster of Kotra block) after the withdrawal of the Local Classroom School (MUKTANGAN vidyalaya) of the former government education programme, LOK JUMBISH. Other schools were very far from the village and if any parents wanted their children to have an education, then the children had to go to school by crossing a monsoon river which was dangerous, and this made children turn away from education. With the efforts of the village people, a NFE centre was however opened in the village, but only to close down after a few months.

It is generally said that if we desperately want to achieve anything, you make a persistent effort for it, then every barrier turns out to be a stepping-stone for the achievement. This cliché proved itself when the women of the Tribal Development Forum (Adivasi Vikas Manch) of the village, put forth a proposal to re-open the non-formal education center in their village.

At present 47 girls and boys are studying in the school.

As if this was not enough, the women also raised the demand to appoint the teachers in the defunct government school of the village. Two women's groups raised this issue in the Block Council

(H) Advocacy Work Undertaken

Capacity building of about 250 women was done to help them to learn how to put pressure for Natural Resource Management issues. SHG women participated actively in the issue of the Forest Land People's Movement (Jangal-Jamin-Jan Andolan). NREGA, Forest Dwellers Land rights, Ownership rights to Non-Timber Forest Produce were some issues identified for advocacy. For this purpose of advocacy, a P.O./N.G.O. forum was created at the District and at the State levels. Mass level meetings were held to discuss policy issues at the Milan Mela, and at the Right to Resources workshop. Quarterly, half yearly and annual progress document was created and presented to the State Level Steering Committee. Activities were also undertaken for the Forest Rights Bill and for the Right to Information. As for creating a partners' forum for advocacy at the district and at State levels, since a district level Forum exists, so a separate forum was not created. The SHG women are linked with that forum. Interacting with various thematic groups in the area was also pursued. Mass level meetings were held in 21 villages of 7 panchayats to discuss policy issues of NREGA and the Forest Rights Bill.

(I) Milan Mela

The Tribal Development Forum organized the big annual convention of Tribal people in Kotra, the "Milan Mela" where around 9,000 men and women participated. The theme of the conference this year was the "Right to Food". The conference had an exhibition of various development schemes, Government



programmes, NGO interventions and programmes. The other issues discussed in the workshop were NREGA, RTI, and the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act. This is always a strong mobilization and motivational meeting at Kotra.

THE ADIVASI WOMEN'S AWARENESS SOCIETY

(Adivasi Mahila Jagriti Samiti)

The Adivasi Women's Awareness Society came into being in 1995. It is a mass-membership tribal women's organization active in 104 villages of 22 panchayats in Jhadol and Girwa blocks of Udaipur District. It supports 80 Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The Awareness Society has worked extensively on violence against women and has been responsible for creating awareness on the issue in the area. It has also addressed the issue by working with the police to sensitize them in dealing with tribal women victims. The women members of the Awareness Society understand the legal systems and procedures. The Society also encourages activities of income augmentation on the basis of agriculture and animal husbandry. The objective of the Adivasi Women's Awareness Society is:

- To strengthen women's organizations and enhance their analyzing capacity
- To enhance women's financial status and conserve natural resources for income generation
- To empower women's Self Help Groups which will help them work in a many-sided way on various aspects of development of the women members

Astha has the plan for all of the People's Organizations, that they will become more self-directing, self-sustaining, and the dependence on Astha will be less. One of the things the Society leaders have to learn is how to raise funds and manage money. Programme Planning is also a skill needed. To this end, Astha asked the Adivasi Women's Awareness Society leadership group if they would like to take up work on a UNDP supported project of social and physical development, and with Astha's help, learn how to take and implement project work that can help the Society to mature. The women of the leadership team agreed, and so, in this financial year, the implementation of work of the "Social Mobilization for Natural Resource Management" project was undertaken by the Society.

In this project work, Astha provides guidance and strategic direction to the partners in planning, implementation, awareness and perspective building, capacity building, undertaking advocacy, training and leadership development for women, problem solving, and maintaining of accounts. Astha has the role of monitoring, evaluation and documenting of the project, providing technical and infrastructural support as and when required. Astha has made available the expertise of both senior and field level staff to support the project implementation.

Meetings to organize Poor & Marginalised Women -



The women involved in the project, were chosen on the basis of participatory selection, and were organized into Self-Help Groups, which were then federate into Village Organizations. Regular monthly meetings (12 meetings X 4 clusters) and quarterly review meetings (4 meetings X 4 clusters) were held. During these meetings, plans for training programmes and conferences were discussed, as well as issues were raised; the women discussed the drought relief work and prepared proposals for physical

development work in their villages. Awareness about the NREGA, the process of registration, job cards, application for work and other related issues were raised. Issues related to Natural

Resource Management, Women empowerment, savings of the SHGs, internal loaning and the prospects of income generation activities were also discussed. The SHG members also shared the progress of their groups. The community volunteers provided information about the government schemes and helped them to organize their groups and undertake work for strengthening the natural resource base.

Even the male population displayed interest in the discussions. Government Officials were invited to impart information regarding government efforts for social development and to spread awareness.

The groups were motivated to raise their issue in gram panchayat and gram sabha meetings; at the same time, efforts were made to sensitize the panchayat leaders. As a result 12 handpumps were installed by the PHED department on request of various groups through the Gram Panchayats (at Pai - 3, Undri - 1, Alsigar - 2, Makadev - 2, Bhilwara - 1, Bari - 1, Nainbara - 1, Selana - 1).

In order to involve the community in the interventions several activities like health camps, women's conferences and social reform meetings were organized. NRM planning meetings were held where PRA tools were used to identify the resources and the gaps in resources and knowledge. Resource mapping was done and the community people identified the possible NRM activities.

In order to identify needed areas for action by the women, a Women's Convention (**Jagriti Mela**) was organized in Paduna Village, Girwa Block, Udaipur District on 22-23 December 2006, with the objective to understand and share the role of women in social development, and to develop a common understanding about Panchayati Raj and local self governance. There were 801 participants. Issues related to women such as health, education, increasing income in the family, conservation of natural resources, and women's rights were talked about. In the Jagriti mela there were exhibitions for agricultural development and income generation activities. The objective of the Mela was to enable the SHGs to learn from each other and develop leadership qualities, understand political, economic and social rights and duties, and learn about welfare schemes of the government in tribal areas.

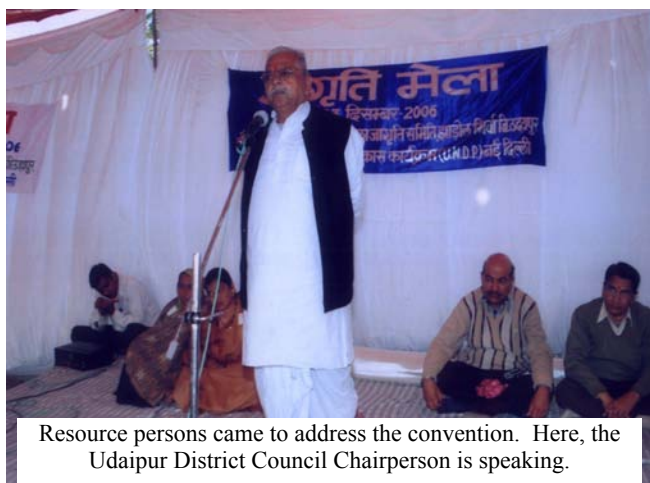
Now we are confident to fight for our rights...

This is the story of Ambavi Bai of village of Palwada in Jhadol district. Ambavi was educated only up till 5th standard. When she turned 18 her parents decided to marry her off, and in 2001, Ambavi was married to Bhavarlal of Jekda village who was educated up till 8th standard. He was a farmer by occupation. The first year of their marriage was a happy time for the couple. But life was not easy for Ambavi after that. Her mother-in-law and her husband began to torture her; the reason was made clear to her – Ambavi was elder than Bhavarlal. The mother-in-law often abused Ambavi, that she seems to be the bride of Bhavarlal's father and not Bhavarlal. The tyranny did not end here. The mother-in-law accused her and disgraced her even before anyone from her maternal village who visited Jekda. The only option before her now was to go back to her parents. But for how long the poor parents could afford to keep her?

A few days passed and she returned to her in-law's house. Tortured, she remained in the house for three years when finally she gathered courage to ask for help from the Adivasi Women's Awareness Society (AWAS). But the in-laws filed a report in the police. With the intervention of AWAS and the police, it was decided that Bhavarlal will take Ambavi into his house and five *panchs* (community elders) were selected to monitor the case and protect Ambavi while she stayed at her husband's house. But all in vain. Not even 12 days had passed and they started tormenting her again. The *panchs* came to intervene on Ambavi's behalf, but they were also abused.

The SHG members of her village again called upon AWAS. A case was filed in the family court. And she was finally liberated from the clutches of her in-laws. She got a divorce. With the intention of wanting to help her, the group helped her in opening a grocery shop. She has now got rid of all harassment and is earning her living with respect.

Here there was a successful intervention by group members, not only in that it addressed Ambavi Bai's problem, but also that it raised her confidence.



Resource persons came to address the convention. Here, the Udaipur District Council Chairperson is speaking.

Resource persons attended, and gave information related to the power of organization, education; about women's health, like diet to the newborn, safe delivery, seasonal diseases; and information on other topics like child marriages, drug abuse, etc.

Overall, the UNDP project was able to strengthen the women through collective organization and mobilization. Women's Empowerment thus obtained may serve a range of ends including access to credit, land or health, protection of rights

of women etc. Complementary poverty interventions included support for those activities, which focus on improving living conditions of marginalized groups.

Women and Agriculture and Natural Farming Practices Promoted

Wheat seeds were distributed to 500 women and vegetable seeds to 500 women, maize demonstration beds on the land of 35 women. Efforts were directed towards providing information and demonstrations about seed varieties, agriculture practices, and at the same time, the processes for linkages with the Agriculture Department. This was followed by discussions with the Department

Around 600 women were sensitized regarding land rights in resource workshops, women's conferences, awareness camps, fairs, cluster and regional meetings. About 165 men were sensitized regarding the role of women in decision-making. This Gender sensitization session was held during several trainings. Live demonstrations of women managing cropping land, horticulture, agro-forestry, vegetable growing and cultivating medicinal plants was undertaken.

- 105 women were involved in pasture land development at 8 villages
- 500 women undertook kitchen gardening for vegetables
- 1 group (5 members) developed 5 units of Awla plantation.
- Fodder seeds were given to 40 women

With a view to promote organic farming through the use of bio-fertilizer and bio-pesticide and by promoting composting, the project supported 35 vermi compost structures directly, and another 16 structures were developed by the community through **passing on the benefit concept**. The women use the same for their agriculture.

These land-based poverty interventions include: settlement schemes, land reform, technological change (high yielding varieties), subsidised input packages (fertiliser, seeds) and increased producer prices.

The nature of activities being undertaken includes organizing and capacitating the benefiting community for effective implementation of the project. This includes building their knowledge and skills on natural resource management for the regeneration and sustainable management of their common resources. This will eventually increase their earnings and quality of life.

Income Generation Activities:

- **Ginger production:** 20 families in 12 SHGs were provided with ginger seeds by AWAS. They were provided field level training on cultivation and protection of the plants against diseases and pests.
- **Rabbit Rearing:** Under the project, 6 women from Jadol have attended a 10 days training (13-23 February, 2007) on rabbit rearing at Mount Abu. The women procured 3 rabbits each (1 male, 2 Female) as the capital to establish the rabbit rearing units in their village.
- **Papad:** Two groups made papad after having training on it, and did marketing at the local level. 3-4 women are involved in Papad making and earn Rs. 30-40 per day.
- **Washing Powder:** Two groups made 460 kg of “surf” washing powder, packed in bags of 1 kg, ½ kg and 100 gm. and sold within the groups themselves
- **Pickle:** Two groups participated in the pickle making training.



Livelihood Based on Forest and Forest Resources

Work on profiling vulnerable livelihoods of the community during the initial year of the project provided a more in-depth understanding of food insecurity and vulnerable livelihoods, the broader context in which the communities exist, and possible options for improving the food security situation of these vulnerable groups.

Keeping this understanding in view, in 2 Villages, people were organized to protect the forest area, and at the same time, efforts were directed to advocate and sensitize the forest department about the limitations and problems related to Joint Forest Management (JFM). Efforts were also made to honour women's rights over NTFP¹³.

¹³ NTFP – Non Timber Forest Produce (seeds, fruits, leaves, gum, honey, grass, etc. – everything but wood)



Jungle Jameen : The women of the SHGs and the men and women of the area participated in the national and the state level conference and rallies and *dharnas* to claim for the tribal forest dwellers, the ownership of their forest land homesteads. As a result of all efforts, the Tribal Forest Rights Bill has been passed by the Lok Sabha.

Improving Food Security The project draws primarily on lessons learned through case studies of food security information systems work in past two years, but also takes into account experiences from related work in other regions. Raw information was collected on indigenous food habits and its compilation is ongoing. Besides this discussions on traditional food habits were done with all women in several meetings. While the production of indigenous foods was promoted among around 500 women, the use of indigenous foods was promoted in the entire community. Around 100 families were sensitized with regard to maintenance of balance between consumption and cash crops. 6 grain banks have been promoted in Jhadol and more are being formed. 5 seed banks were promoted, and participatory varietal selection was promoted among 66 farmers. All families were sensitized on women's needs for food, nutrition and health issues. To improve the functioning of the PDS and other assisted schemes like Annapurna and Antodya, members of 22 SHGs kept regular watch on the PDS Shops in their areas. Women of 30 villages participated in NREGA padyatra and awareness week to improve functioning of the NREGA.

Employment Guarantee (Rozgar guarantee kanoon) Scheme: In Jhadol about 1,800 people were helped to apply for above scheme. All women were provided information about the NREGA; each family was ensured employment of 100 days in a year. Information was



provided about the procedure for filing applications requesting work, and for making job cards. The women were entrusted with the responsibility of finding out which family in their villages and beginning the process of job cards. All those who have received the job cards were asked to apply for work in gram panchayat. The campaign for improved functioning of NREGA has picked up pace and the processes of application for work and registration of job cards have started at village level.

The exercise has been initiated to ensure effective participation of women in their own development. Besides this, it seeks to ensure feedback regarding implementation and policy

environment at the district level for increasing effectiveness and removing bottlenecks in implementation.

Building capacity of PRI members to a plan and access govt. and own resources (conditional on assessing resources)

During Jagriti, the General Body members at the village level were provided training. Village Gram Sabhas were trained on the aspects of “Gram Ganarajya” – TSR. Capacity building of Panchayat office bearers was undertaken through training at block level and exposure visits to other successful PRIs. 2 Gram Sabha (for tribal areas) / Ward Sabha plans were prepared that were incorporated in the Panchayat level plans.

Building Women’s capacity to participate in PRI

Jagriti Mela meetings, conferences and focussed group discussions were used as tools to raise awareness regarding rights, responsibilities, laws regarding PRI, amongst the women and amongst the PRI office bearers. Women were trained to prepare Plans for PRI funds and were trained to monitor Panchayat funded works. As a result Gram Sabha (for tribal areas) / Ward Sabha plans were prepared. Many of the activities planned by Ward and Gram Sabha were submitted to NREGA plan and are incorporated for work now.

Sensitizing Village and Panchayat level (Samiti) Govt. functionaries

Members and executives from different SHGs visited field level government machinery and held meeting with them regularly, as a result seven SHGs were assured of participation of government functionaries to their meetings Information sharing meetings were held with government functionaries at the field level and the government functionaries were also invited to SHG meetings. Twenty-six villages participated in Jal Rath yatra by the government, while cluster level and federation leaders participated in Health awareness Yatra by Govt. at panchayat level.

Experiences documented and shared

A photographic records indicating ‘before’ and ‘after’ situations have been maintained of all structures and activities. But systematic presentation is yet to be prepared. Video documentary record is also maintained where applicable. At the same time experience sharing workshops were held and case studies on women participating in traditional spaces were also prepared to be used in websites. Wherever learning is possible from any incidence, it is used for similar intervention in other villages or groups of the area.

Advocacy work

Capacity building of the about 200 women was done to put pressure for Natural resource Management issues. SHG women participated actively in the issue of Jangal-Jamin-Jan Andolan and Dungarpur mela. The issues for advocacy were NREGA and RTI. Mass level meetings to discuss policy issues were held in two Panchayats in this period to create a forum for people to take up issues. 2 Panchayat level meetings were held where the ward Panch and Sarpanch also participated.

Replication of Social mobilization approach through mainstreaming gender,

Jagriti Mela was an effective tool to share project components and learning with village people, other NGOs, PRI and government. Quarterly, half yearly and annual report and the process document of last year have kept track and reported on replication in the Progress Reports. 1 quarterly, 1 half yearly report and 1 yearly report were prepared and presented before the steering committee. 3-district level and 2 state level meeting were held to share project components and learning with village people, other NGOs, PRI and government.

Right to Resource workshop

Two Right to Resource workshops were organized at Pai and Kanthria, where 426 women participated. The objective of the workshop was to make the people aware of their rights, specially the rights over productive resources like land, forest and water.

Health Related Activities

Five check-up camps were organized at Makerdev (79) and Saru (91), Undri (91), Parevi(106), Nainbara(121) where women and children were given medical check up and medicines. The families were sensitized on women's needs for food, nutrition and health issues. Severe cases were recommended to the Block and District level health Centres and Hospital.

RAJSAMAND WOMEN'S FORUM

(Rajsamand Mahila Manch)

Rajsamand Women's Forum is a federation of Women's Village level and Block level groups in 4 Blocks of Rajsamand District - Rajsamand, Rail Magra, Kamnor and Kumbhalgarh. The Women's Forum works on women's atrocity cases, the organization of women's groups, Self Help Groups, water issues, etc. It is working for the empowerment of women in 210 villages of 75 Gram Panchayats of 4 Blocks (out of 7 blocks) of the districts. There are 5,983 members in the Association. The objective of the Forum is to help the women, organized and aware, to solve their problems of deprivation and exploitation.

Astha has been behind the organization, preparing them for their work on women's issues and also organizing various trainings for the women members and leaders, has organized camps and conferences, and supported them during the drought, etc.

Major Objectives --

- Development of leadership in the Organization / Sangathan.
- Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality.
- Campaigning for Voter Awareness and Communal Harmony.
- Increasing the Participation of Women in the Panchayati Raj processes
- Giving Support to Widows, Separated, and Single Women.
- Stopping the Violence and Atrocities committed against women and girls.

Highlights of the Work in This Year

Forum Meetings: Rajsamand Women's Forum organizes regular monthly meetings. The purpose of these meetings is regular monitoring of the activities and follow-up of the programmes planned, and to monitor the progress in the cases of women's atrocities, and other cases that come up related to women's issues. The meetings organized are as follows:

- **Village Level Meetings:** 48 meetings were held in different villages of the Blocks of Rajsamand District. During the meeting the women were encouraged to put forward their problem without any hesitation, in front of Association and people in government offices. Problems in the villages were discussed and information about government schemes was provided. Plans to solve local level problems are made.
- **District Level Meetings:** the workers of the Rajsamand Womens Forum organized 12 meetings for monthly reporting of work in the Blocks, and discussion of block level problems. Plans are made for the next month's programmes according to the current issues, and if needed, issue-based training programmes are planned.
- **Core Committee Meetings (Sanchalak Mandal):** selected representatives of the 4 Blocks organized the meetings 6 times in the year to plan and discuss how to make the Association strong and increase the number of members i.e. involving more people and making them aware. This Committee gives overall direction to the Rajsamand Women's Forum.

- **Case Committee Meeting:** These meetings are held on the 8th of every month. 12 meetings were organized with active women of the Forum. In the period of reporting, now 228 cases out of 312 cases that came up have been solved. Major cases of success were - Anita Mathur got 8 months compensation from the Panchayat Samiti. Pooja Kunwar, who was raped, was provided Rs. 20,000/- from the culprit. Mooli Bai got land possession after 40 years.
- **At various Village, Block, District meetings, various issues were discussed** -Violence against Women, Child Marriage, the Debt issue, the Drought Issue, the Employment Guarantee Programme, Ration Shops, Children's Education, Health, a Liquor Ban, B.P.L. Selection, RTI (Right to Information), Corruption, Gender Equality (Female Foeticide etc.), Panchayati Raj Programmes, etc.

Issue Based Programmes

Loan Issues: There were some banks, which were charging high interest on the loans taken by the poor as they were deprived of proper information. There were some cases in which people had returned the loans and still got notices from the bank. The Forum discussed these cases and got the bank account information of the 55 people from the banks, and were able to get “no dues certificates” for 11 people who faced such problems.

Employment Guarantee Act: Rajsamand was not one of the Districts selected under the NREGA during this year. However, the Rajsamand Women's Forum has been very active in relation to the Employment Guarantee Act. They have organized rallies at the Block headquarters of all of the 4 Blocks in which they are working – Kamnor (450 people), Rajsamand (300 people), Rail Magra (450 people), Kumbalgarh (200 people) – demanding that Rajsamand District be selected in the second round of selection of Districts for NREGA. A big rally was also held at the District headquarters, with 600 participants and it seems that Rajsamand will probably be a selected District in the work to begin April 2007 – but it is not yet final, as there are political considerations going on before the list can be final. A banner was signed and sent to Government of India, demanding that Rajsamand be a selected District in the next round of Districts chosen for the NREGA.

Also, the women of the Forum helped a lot in the Social Audit organized by Astha, MKSS and the Government of Rajasthan in Udaipur District, in February 2007. Several women leaders joined the teams, which analysed the data, went to the field to contact the people, and brought the problems before both the people and the administration.

Public Distribution System: To eradicate the irregularities in the arrangement of ration for people under different schemes like BPL, Annapurna, Antyodaya etc. a survey was done in 10 Ration Shop areas, and ration cards and stock registers were checked. 20 families were provided ration. They met Revenue officer to discuss the matter and find solution to it. A ration dealer at Manarila Ka Guda was suspended due to his being corrupt.

Drought Issue: Rajsamand District had less rain, although most of the state good rains. The revenue officer (patwari) did not even declare these families drought affected, and the Rajsamand Women's Forum took up the issue. They demanded that the families be helped by drought relief works being opened in their areas, or helped by opening NREGA works in their area. A rally supporting these points was held, and 650 women participated in the rally.

Female Foeticide: Meetings were organized to develop awareness about gender equality. In particular, information was provided the Act related to female foeticide, the Prevention of Pre-Natal Sex Determination Act, and demands were made to implement the Act. A rally was organized in September 2006 to highlight the issue. The members of the Forum took part in a symposium organized by other organizations and presented their views and gave a memorandum to the District Collector. A total 200 participants were there.



Women’s Counseling Centre: For the past 2 years, the Rajsamand Women’s Forum has had a Rajasthan State Health Department project, of a Family Counseling Centre, which has operated in space provided at the government hospital. It is felt that women in need of counseling may feel hesitant to go to a counseling center, but no one will question them if they go to the hospital. The Forum has hired 2 counselors, and the counseling work has gone well. Of course, the leaders of the Women’s Forum still take some cases that come to them directly, and they help the Family Counseling Centre staff with follow-up action in the field. In this financial year, the sanction came to the Rajsamand Women’s Forum for an extension of the Family Counseling Centre for another year.

The Family Counseling Centre also organized a training programme for women elected representatives in 7 Blocks of the District, to sensitize them to the problems of violence against women, and to inform them that the Counseling Centre existed.

Because of the success of the Family Counseling Centre, the Rajsamand Women’s Forum has gotten a lot of visibility in the District, and the Forum leaders have gained strength in their objective to establish a Women’s Court in the area.

Mid Day Meal Survey: A survey was done in 10 schools of 2 Gram Panchayats in which many irregularities were found. Even at an Anganwadi Centre, the lactating women were not provided nutritious diet (Poshahar). The report was given to the state government, and action was taken, and the condition is somewhat better.

Education and Health: The girls who have not been to school were encouraged them to join (participate in) the campaign by government (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) within which Girls Education Camps (Regional Camps) were organized. Efforts were made for exemption of fees for children of widows. The members of the Forum supported the National Health Programmes and camps were organized to treat women with herbal medicines.

Panchayati Raj Programme

While most of the work in relation to women elected representataives in the Blocks of Rajsamand in which the RMM works, is organized by the Local Self Governance Resource Unit, nevertheless, whenever there is a big programme or convention, the Forum members participate, and help with the mobilization of women to attend, and with the mechanics of the convention or big meeting. The Forum members also support the Cluster meetings.

Child Marriage Issue: To stop the practice of child marriage, regular campaign work and meetings with the villagers were held. Those panchayats were selected in which people of those caste (like Bhil, Jat, Salvi, Gujjar etc.) lived where the practice of child marriage was prevalent. The Rajsamand Women's Forum leaders and members talked with caste leaders, held rallies, performed street plays and held meetings in the villages to explain to people about the adverse effects of child marriage, and encouraged them to stop this practice. Eight child marriages were also stopped. The Pandits who are called to perform marriages, play a major role in the



programme and so a convention with Pundits was held. The Pundits were influenced and took an oath not to perform marriages of children. The caste organizations also resolved that in their caste at least, no girl or boy would be married under the legal age limit.

A survey was done of the 4 blocks in 4 gram panchayats to see whether these interventions had an effect, and it was found that the incidence of child marriages have been reduced to a great extent in the area.

Right to Information Booth: During the Stop Corruption Campaign (Brashtachar Rokna Abhiyan), July 1 – 15, 2006, the Rajsamand Mahila Manch did a lot of work from the booth they had set up at the district headquarters, to help people to fill in applications for information, under the Right to Information Act procedure. As a result, people have gotten information and learned how to get information from the government using RTI processes. This has helped to reduced corruption. 1,000 people who had filed their application to be registered on the BPL list could find out through RTI whether their name was listed or not. When their name was not found on the lists, appeals were filed to get the “left-out” people registered on the BPL list.

In this year, the Government put forward a proposal to amend the RTI Act, and insert a clause by which “file notings” on documents would not have to be revealed to the applicants. People opposed this, and ultimately, the members of the Lok Sabha rejected the amendment. In the public opinion poll held across the country, in Rajsamand District, Rajsamand Women's Forum members contacted the public, filled in the forms, and found that out of 500 people contacted, 382 opposed the change in the Act. The Rajsamand data was sent to the central tabulation center.

Liquor Shop: At a Bhil Basti there was a liquor shop. Men used to drink a lot and beat their wives and children. People went to the liquor dealer, asking him to remove his shop from the area, but he paid no heed to them. Finally, people complained about him and filed an FIR against the dealer, but no action was taken against him. So people gathered near the liquor shop and spread thorns and bushes around the shop so no one could reach the shop, and to threaten the dealer to close the shop, they threw stones at the shop. At last the dealer shifted his shop far away from the locality.

Another case was from Gram Panchayat - Kuraj. The people of the Yadav Caste Society were disturbed by the presence of a liquor shop in their locality. The drunkards created a nuisance; they teased women, and even beat women and children! The people came to the Block level meeting of the Rajsamand Women's Forum, and discussed this problem. Some members of the Forum went to the local Sarpanch and asked him to get the liquor shop closed. The pressure was created by the Forum and the dealer had to close the shop. Thus, through collective action, the Rajsamand Women's Forum got the liquor shops removed from two villages.

Women's Day Celebration

Women's Day was celebrated on 8th March. The Rajsamand Women's Forum organized a women's convention in which about 600 women participated. Tara Bhandari, Chairperson of



the Rajasthan Women's Commission was invited as chief guest. Other guests were Dr. Vinita Srivastava from M.S.W. College and Dr. Ginny Shrivastava. They all shared their views. Additional S.P. was also invited and the women were given the opportunity to put their cases before him, and he took notes for further action, and advised the women to see him in his office the following

week. There is good coordination with government officials and 12 cases raised in the meeting have been solved with their support.

On this day, various issues like violence against women, women's health, Employment Guarantee Act, Drought, Loans etc. were discussed, and/or were displayed in information booths. A rally was also held.

Educational Tour

A visit to the Ahmedabad, Gujarat NGO's Awaz and Mahila Patchwork Society was made to learn more about how other organizations take up women's atrocity cases, to learn about communal harmony work, and to learn from the income generating activities of the organizations. Resource persons from the organizations visited are ready to train the Rajasthan women, provide them material and help in marketing also, in the month of June. In Rajsamand, already the women are making incense sticks, are growing and processing pulses and taken up vermicompost, selling both worms and fertilizer.

JARGA AREA DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

(Jarga Kshetriya Vikas Samiti)

The Jarga Area Development Society (Jarga Kshetriya Vikas Samiti) was formed 9 years ago, and at present, is working with adivasi people in 139 villages of 27 Gram Panchayats (out of the 37 Gram Panchayats of Kumbhalgarh Block). The total membership of the Organization is approximately 4,650 (3,835 men and 815 women). The Core Committee of the Organization meets on the 15th of every month. The Society has divided the work in 4 divisions according to the area/region.

1. Hera Patta- 7 Gram panchayats
2. Nala Patta I- 9 Gram panchayats
3. Nala Patta II- 9 Gram panchayats
4. Bourhat Patta- 2 Gram Panchayats

The feudal and upper caste domination of adivasis is a feature of all areas where the Society works. Astha works with the leadership of the Peoples' Organization to build up the strength of the tribal people in the area. Astha has strengthened the organizational leadership through training camps, workshops and an annual women's conference. The Organization has faced several challenges over the last year, including opposition from local influential people and conspiracies by the political parties to break the Organization. The Organization has withstood this opposition, and remained intact. The annual conference of the members of the Jarga Development Society helped to convey that the Society was strong, and was dealing with legitimate and important issues in the area. After this, more cooperation has been given at the administrative and political levels.

Major Objectives --

- To prevent much of the exploitation and oppression that is now going on.
- To develop leadership in the Organization.
- To establish the tribal people's rights over their Forest Land homesteads, and their rights of access to natural resources.
- To work on Natural Resource Management and income generating activities, and "value added" economic activities for Tribal poor people in the area.
- To work on women's empowerment, and with the women, to decrease the excessive liquor consumption.
- To motivate the people of the area to be active in the local self-government processes, the Gram Panchayat and Panchayati Raj Institutions, and to access development resources through them.

Astha's role in relation to the Jarga Area Development Society was to support it and strengthen it. Astha organized many training programmes for the leaders and members of the Jarga Society – Group Leaders' Training, Leadership Training. Astha supported the leaders of the Society in organizing the Women's Convention and the large Annual Convention.

Major Highlights of the Year --

The Jarga Area Development Society members have been involved in some movements and social issues of the area.

Migrant Labour – The Society has helped with the registration of migrant labourers who have gone out of Kumbalgarh Block, Rajsamand District, and helped to link them to structures in Gujarat, which can help them – NGO contacts, and labour unions of unorganized labour. 270 labourers were registered and 260 identity cards have been made. The Society members have also helped family members left behind, when required.

Forest Land Rights Advocacy – Fifty tribal farm families, whose homesteads are on Forest Land, were involved in the Delhi *dharnas* (Sit-Ins) to pressure the government to pass the Forest Rights Act. The Act was passed by Parliament in December 2006, and now the target is to complete 891 files of tribal farm families so that they can get legal title to their homestead land, once the allotment processes begin. 30 files have been completed. People from villages-Pipla, Machda, Bara and Siya, are still on their lands even after interference and harassment of the Forest Department. They are struggling for their rights to land and to earn their livelihood through farming.

Right to Information Act – In Kumbalgarh Block, a survey of 250 people was done, when it was observed that the Below Poverty Line (BPL) lists had serious errors. The members of the Jarga Society used the Right to Information Act to get to see the questionnaires of the government that were filled in by those who interviewed people and categorized each one as “Above” or “Below” the Poverty Line. By seeing the questionnaires, it could be determined whether the published lists of BPL families were indeed wrong. The leaders of the Jarga Society then wrote to the government, giving them a list of names that should have been included in the BPL lists, and were not. They got the new forms, which were correct now, filled in – these were also sent to the government.

5 people participated in Jaipur *Dharna*, for getting changes in BPL list. Even the government of Rajasthan has admitted that the lists were 80% wrong, and ordered that the process be corrected.

NREGA –Members of the Jarga Development Society took out a rally in Kelwara, Kumbalgarh Block (Block headquarters) demanding that Rajsamand District be selected as an NREGA District in the second round. At the Block level, a memorandum was given for the same.

Public Distribution System: A survey was done of PDS shops. In the village Pipla, ration shops were surveyed and information was asked about distribution of grains, kerosene etc. In the village Udawad, one of the Ration dealers, Purushottam Jain, filed a fake case against a farmer, Bhajaram. Even after returning the loan taken from the dealer, he said that it was only the interest of the loan that was returned, and the principle still remained. Through the Jarga Society, legal aid was provided to Bhajaram and pressure was built by the organization. The farmer won the case and the dealer was suspended. Another dealer has been appointed in his place. In another village, Badgaon, as a result of the survey and subsequent action by the Society, one ration dealer was also suspended for being corrupt. The dealers are now afraid of being corrupt and charging compound interest on loans given to the farmers.

Jarga Samelan (Annual Convention 2007)- The annual convention was held on 26th Feb. 2007, at Kelwara Village at a place called Sati Ka Chapar. During the Convention, 800 people from 46 villages of 26 panchayats participated. People from other areas – Dungarpur District, Bali Block of Pali District, Kotra Block of Udaipur District and from other Blocks of Rajasamand District also attended. The organizer of the Tribal Development Forum, Ms. Harmi Bai Ahari, was invited as the chief guest. She encouraged people to get organized and to fight for their rights and question the elected representatives about the promises they had made. The members of the Jarga Society presented the annual report of the work of the Society, and told about the objectives of the Jarga Area Development Society. Speakers also spoke about about the Right to Life and the Right to Work, and gave information about the Employment Guarantee Act. Those present at the Jarga Convention signed a memorandum to the Chief Minister, demanding that Rajsamand District be included in the NREGA Districts in the second round.

The condition of farmers was discussed, and the problems of living under great pressure of debt, so much so that sometimes they commit suicide. Information was given about how they can be helped to come out of such situations.



There were some cultural programmes also through which various issues and schemes were communicated – various songs, dances and plays were presented during the Convention to enlighten the people and encourage them.

Self Help Groups (SHG's): 6 Self Help groups were formed in the month of April and now there are 28 SHGs. Among these, 12 groups have been provided loans by the banks, and income generating activities are going on. The leaders of the groups were given 3 days training to develop knowledge about forest produce marketing and other means of income generation.

Village Contact Campaign (Gram Sampark Campaign)

In January, the government organized a social audit (*Gram Sampark Abhiyan*) for work done during 3 yrs of development programmes related to Distribution of Nutritious Diet in Anganwadis, construction of school buildings and anicuts, and the amount spent on these works, etc. The SDM ordered a check to see if there was some irregularities in the implementation of the programmes. The active members of the Jarga Society gave full support to this effort in the Village Assemblies, or Gram Sabhas.

The Future

The Society is moving ahead now as all the conflicts that arose earlier among the leaders have been solved. Those who want to work together for the development of the people of the area are doing so, and those who do not, are silent. New members are joining the Society, and the Society is stronger at the end of the year than it was at the beginning.

VAGAD LABOURERS AND FARMERS ORGANIZATION

(Vagad Mazdoor Kisan Sangathan)

This Organization was formed in 1998. The People's Organization started with meetings of those tribal farm families whose homesteads were on forest land. The meetings explored with the people ways they could keep their rights over their means of production, their land. Slowly, other issues were raised by the people over the 8 to 9 year period. Issues such as Tribal Self Rule (since Dungarpur District is a Schedule V area), employment, credit issues, migration, women's organization and empowerment. Whatever were the problems of the people in this "Vagad" area, were taken up by the Organization. The word "Vagad" in the Vagadi Language means 'Jungle'. This region was rich in forests, but due to British Rule, laws and policies, the natural resources were destroyed, and over the years, many people had to migrate to Gujarat or to other neighboring states for their livelihood.

This condition led people to have a livelihood pattern of small marginal farming, collection and sale of minor forest produce, and daily wage labouring. This balance requires income from each of the 3 areas. In 1998, the forest land issue emerged and people from Dungarpur District approached Astha to help them to get organized to fight displacement. Astha appointed 1 worker to Dungarpur and with his help, the people formed the Vagad Labourers and Farmers Organization, which now works in the 5 Blocks of Dungarpur District, and in 3 Blocks of Banswara District.

At present there are 15,272 members up to now in the organization.

Objectives:

1. To establish rights of adivasi people over the natural resources for their livelihood.
2. To make people aware of the benefits of the Tribal Self Rule Legislation, and to help them to become Village Republics with greater control over the resources and social life of their villages.
3. To work for employment and income generating activities.
4. To stop corruption and irregularities in development programmes and help in procuring benefits of schemes by the poor people.
5. To solve issues of women like gender inequality, injustice and to stop women atrocities. Make laws known to the people about women rights.
6. To build and maintain a strong structure and fight the adverse effects of economic policies and globalization on the poor people.
7. Develop leadership capacity in the Organization, and to work with them in actions for the development of the poor people of the area.

Activities during the Year

Formation of the Campaign for Rights of Employment and Information (Rozgar Evam Suchna Ka Adhikar Abhiyan)

The Vagad Labourers and Farmers Organization, Dungarpur, was the local host for people who came from all over the country to participate in the NREGA Social Audit in 5 Blocks, during April 2006. About 300 people of the Organization did the main background work of making charts, getting the records from the Blocks, in all ways preparing for the Social Audit in 850 villages from March 25th to April 5th 2006. 31 groups were made for Social Audit done in 200 Gram Panchayats out of the 237. The Social Audit was a tremendous success, and the report with recommendations was given to the District Collector.

The members and leaders of the Organization, with the support of Astha, also did the preparations for the follow-up to the Social Audit in January 2007. There was one panel discussion about the implementation of the Employment Guarantee Act with: the Collector, the officer heading the Employment Guarantee work in the District, BDOs, Programme Officers, and elected representatives – President of the District Council, and the Chairpersons of the Block Committees (Jila Pramukh and Pradhans of the Panchayat Samitis).

Bank Loan Repayment Atrocities

With the help of Astha, the leaders of the Organization have helped their members to question and calculate the loan repayments demanded by the banks. It was discovered that banks were “over-recovering” loans given to the simple tribal farmers. Due to wrong calculation of interest, and calous bank employees, the banks sent demands for the next installment of the bank loans to people who had already paid back the loans, with interest, and more! Cases of exploitation were also uncovered by the use of the Right to Information Act – the Act was used to get data from bank records. 10 people were saved with the help of the Organization.

Tribal Self Rule (TSR)

Vagad has been working on TSR with more than 110 villages in Dungarpur and Banswara District. Each TSR village Gram / Gaon Sabha has formed a “leadership committee” and selected leaders from each committee have come together to form Area or “Pal” Councils or “Parishads”. The “Pal” is a traditional clustering of 12 villages. The collective strength of the Gram / Gaon Sabha leaders, united in the Pal Councils, have strengthened the position of the decisions taken by TSR villages, an important development, in fulfilling the original intention of the PESA legislation (Panchayats {Extension to the Scheduled Areas} Act 1996).

Under TSR Programme, a general meeting was held between the 4th and the 6th of January, 2007 at Dungarpur. In February, 220 people took part in a rally and gave a memorandum through the District Collector to the State Government, with demands about various problems – displacement, heavy rainfall, housing, compensation, bank loan repayment etc. Two members of the Vagad Labourers and Farmers Organization also attended a workshop on Tribal Self Rule in India, held in Hyderabad from the 28th of July to the 6th of August, 2006.

Village Republic Convention (8th Convention)

About 2,800 people participated. Dr. B. D. Sharma was invited as a Chief Speaker and Mr. Dilip Singh Bhuria was the Chief Guest. The objective of the Convention was to take stock of the progress of Tribal Self Rule in the District, in Rajasthan, and in the country, and to encourage the people to continue to take their villages into their own control. It is a time of solidarity, of encouraging the people that a “new world for them is possible”, and of enjoyment in being together.

The Kadana Dam Displacement Issue in Banswara District

The Kadana Dam was constructed about 25 years ago in Gujarat, and when completed, the dam backwaters extended into Anandpuri Block of Banswara District of Rajasthan, displacing many villages of tribal farm families. Early on in the Dam construction process, the tribal families who would be displaced were given land papers for alternate land in the area. But the people could not imagine how that river *down there*, in the valley, could over come *up here* to their hillside homesteads, and so they didn't go to occupy their new land sites. When the dam was finished, and the waters flooded their fields and homes, they went to the land that had been allotted, but by then, other poor tribal families had occupied the land. So they returned and have been struggling ever since, to survive and to get some sort of justice. The Vagad Labourers and Farmers Organization has taken up this issue with the

struggling people, and have done a survey of affected families. The work on the issue is ongoing.

Forest Land Displacement Issue

The people of the P.O. have been struggling for almost 10 years, as part of the Forest Land People's Movement. Just before the Central Government Forest Rights Bill was passed, 400 P.O. members went to Delhi and participated in the major rally on the 29th of November 2006, to put pressure on the government to pass the Bill for Forest Rights for Tribal people whose homesteads are on forest department land. The People participated from different villages and Gram Panchayats of Dungarpur and Banswara Districts, and the P.O. took the lead in raising awareness and mobilizing the people, along with Astha's help. Land rights files for 230 people in Banswara and 340 people of Dungarpur have been prepared. About 1200 files will be prepared to provide proof of land possession.

Microplan

A survey was done in Kushalpada Panchayat of Kushalgarh Block of Banswara District. The survey was done by Astha and the Vagad Labourers and Farmers Organization, working together. In this microplan survey, the objective of this survey was to give the Gram Sabha concrete information to make village level schemes and plans, etc.

Support to Supreme Court Food Commissioner Research Project

The Vagad Organization supported the Supreme Court Food Commissioner's research on the food security situation of handicapped people, old people and single women/widows. The work in Dungarpur District was the Rajasthan sample of a 3-state study which also included Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. The survey was done in the months of December 2006 and January 2007 in 3 villages: Manat, Kodiagud and Holilemda. 3 persons among the people involved in the survey took part in the workshop at Bhubaneshwar from 7-10 March 2007.

Participation in Large Events

- Women's Training Forum from 13th to 15th February
- Gram/Gaon Sabha Committee Camp at Simalwada on 20th and 21st February, 2007.
- 22 members participated in the Social Audit from 14th to 20th February, 2007 at Udaipur.
- 13 members participated in the Gordwad Adivasi Organization annual convention in Bali, Pali District on 22nd and 23rd February, 2007
- 8 members attended the Advocacy Camp in Udaipur on 24th and 25th February, 2007.
- 12 members participated in a meeting/workshop organized by Jarga Samiti at Kumbalgarh.
- 15-20 Gram Panchayat representatives attended a Regional Camp on Tribal Self Rule in Beechiwada Block, on the 11th and 12th of March, 2007.

GORWARD TRIBAL ASSOCIATION

(Gorward Adivasi Sangathan {GAS})

The Garasia tribals of Bali and Desuri Blocks of Pali District have been meeting together as the Gorward Tribal Association since 1999. The first issue they took up was the Forest Land issue, with the Forest Land People's Movement ("Jungle Jameen Jan Andolan"), the people's campaign to fight displacement from tribal homesteads. The people of these Blocks actively participated in the regional level meetings held on the forest land issue. It is primarily an adivasi organization, formed in an area where adivasis are in the minority, and the dominant feudal and upper caste attitudes create many problems for the tribal men and women. The Association is a support to its members when atrocities and hardships arise. Through the collective actions of the Association, the adivasis are trying to increase their self-confidence and strength, to take their place as citizens with full rights and duties.

Major Objectives –

- To fight oppression and exploitation inflicted on the members of the Association
- To improve the economic condition of the poor adivasi families of these 2 Blocks
- To build a strong Organization, which can bring knowledge and analysis of socio-economic conditions to the members, and help them to plan and work together to solve problems faced.
- To develop leadership from amongst the members of the Association, both men and women leaders
- To fight attempts to displace the adivasi families from their forest land homesteads, and to try to get legal land ownership papers for their land
- To work for peace and communal harmony in the area
- To organize and empower the tribal women of the area

Major Highlights of the Year --

Ration Shop Survey – as part of the Right to Food work, the members of the Organization conducted a survey of the working of the ration shops in their area. There are problems and the ration shops are not running properly – some dealers are privately benefiting from the situation. The Gorward Organization have not yet used the data nor made any action plan – but the organization is now planning to do so.

Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act – 125 members of the Organization went to Delhi to take part in the tribal Sit-In to put pressure on the government to pass the Forest Land Rights Bill. There were various meetings on this issue at Kundal, Jhupa, Rotiya, Dewla and Serewa etc. Land related documents were prepared and 130 files were completed.

Follow-up on the Cases of Houses Destroyed by Upper Castes –At Kundal, the homes of 18 families were destroyed by upper castes and the forest department. They were sent to jail and were harassed. But the tribal families struggled and stayed on the land. The Gorward Adivasi Organization helped them to file a compensation case with the ST Commission, and in this reporting period, the case was decided, and Rs. 4 lakhs was awarded to the 9 families, whose homesteads were burned down. Without the guidance, support and follow-up of the Organization, the compensation would probably not have been forthcoming.

The women also protested against the forest department when they were marking the area for boundary wall and plantation work. The forest department work would have affected the

livelihood of 20 families. The forest department had to stop marking the area. Slowly, the adivasi people are developing confidence and strength.

P.C. Scheme with Support of CAPART –

The Association implemented the “People’s Cooperation Scheme” (PC Scheme) in Kuran village. The project is on 200 hectares approximately. The objectives of the project have been-

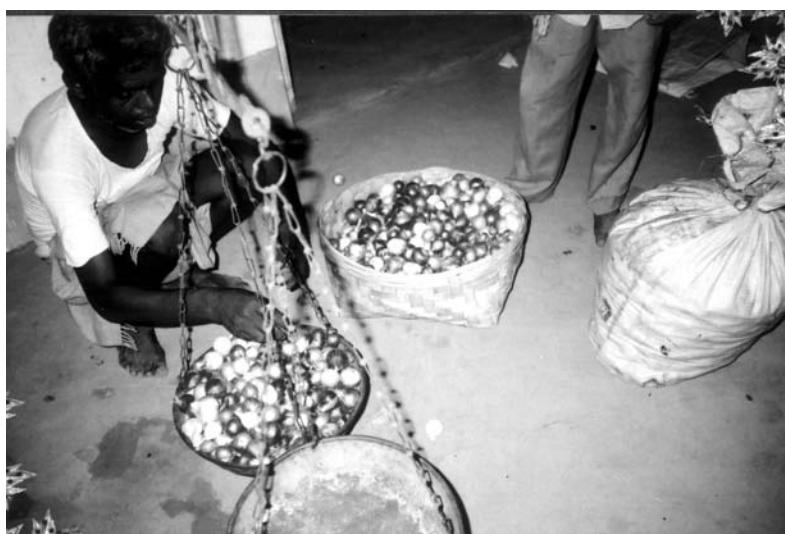
- to develop and manage natural resources of livelihood with the participation of tribal and poor people,
- to develop livelihoods such as agriculture, soil and water conservation, animal husbandry and grass collection, by using people's participation and knowledge
- to inspire an alternative development program for economic development
- to establish the control of tribal people in the marketing of agriculture and forest based produce
- to develop such viable livelihoods and income generating activities that rural women do not have to migrate out of their villages in search of employment

Astha played an important role in helping the tribal people to understand the problems of this “tribal minority” area. People are made aware and have become confident after the capacity building programme.

Women’s Income Generating Activities --

1) **Vegetable Growing:** Tribal families predominantly are involved in the project. In this region, the production of vegetables is not on a commercial basis. 10-15% of the families plant vegetables only for personal consumption during the rains. There is virtually no local market to sell vegetables. Through the project, the people were given information regarding vegetable plantation, and efforts were made to connect them to the market. A committee was made to see that the plantation is done on time, irrigation was done at proper intervals and other treatments could be done to insure a good crop of vegetables.

a) **Onion Production:** The Association had started Onion farming with 20 families



from the village Kuran and Koyalway, and they showed interest in growing and marketing onions. Each family was provided 50 kg vermi compost for 2 beds of onion plantation. Each family got a produce of 2-5 quintals of onions.

Thus, a total of 67.5 quintals production was obtained. They sold onions for Rs. 3-5/- per kg. and they marketed the onions as “organically grown onions” as they had used the vermi-compost instead of chemical fertilizers.

- b) **Ladyfinger, bottle gourd and cucumber production (bindi, lokee, kukadi):** 10 farmers were distributed the seeds of vegetables - ladyfinger, bottlegourd and cucumber . They used the cow dung as manure. Every family earned a profit of Rs. 3,500-10,000/- from the vegetable production.

2) **Marketing Agriculture Products**

- a) **Rupna Mata Self Help Group-Kuran :** From the P.C. Project fund, the Self Help groups in Kuran were provided an amount of Rs. 80,000. It was utilized by undertaking the following activities

Tuar collection: The group collected 7 quintals of tuar dal (pulse or lentil) @Rs.13/kg and sold it in the Nana market @Rs.14/kg, earning a profit of Rs. 700/-.

Chana(Gram) collection: In the month of March, the group collected 10.20 quintals of chana (gram) @Rs.14/kg and sold in market @Rs.19/kg, earning a profit of Rs. 3,060/-.

- b) **Bajrang Self Help Group-Kurka**

Mustard collection: In the month of March, the group collected 42 quintals of mustard seeds @ Rs. 14/kg and sold it in the month of May in the Beda market earning a profit of Rs. 2500.

- 3) **Physical work:** A boundary wall was made around the agricultural land of 5 farmers and a loose stone check dam was constructed.
- 4) **Seed Bank:** A seed bank was made in the year 2006, in which 26 women members are there. The seed bank has a stock of 520 kg of maize (corn). The grains are protected using traditional ways. During times of need, the farmers are provided seeds on loan, and they return it at the time of seed ripening.

- 5) **Vermi-Compost:** 5 Families had made the beds of organic waste and earthworms, and used the vermicompost produced on their fields. The maize and wheat crops yield increased by 40-70%. Looking at the benefits obtained, the interest has developed among other farmers to develop vermicompost beds.



- 6) **Gooseberry (Awla) Farming:** A beginning was made with 15 farmers in Kuran village who started Gooseberry Farming with 20 saplings each. The height of the trees has become 3-4 feet. Because of heavy rains, 7 saplings were destroyed.



- 7) **Wasteland Development:** The

women's groups took responsibility for the development of 18 hectares of wasteland. They constructed a boundary wall, and after preparing the land, then they planted 200 saplings of Bamboo, 100 saplings of custard apple (sitaphal), 200 saplings of gooseberry (Awla), and 60 kg Dhaman grass for fodder. 70% of the saplings have survived. The women groups have taken the responsibility for the maintenance of the wasteland.

- 8) **Irrigation:** In this region, due to more than average rainfall in the 2006 monsoon, water was overflowing from the canal. The farmers stopped this water with the mud dam construction, and using the water to irrigate the winter or Rabi crop. To support their efforts, the farmers were given 2 water pumps. Each can be carried to mountainous regions because of its light weight. The farmers in Kurka village have utilized the pumps; 10 families have done vegetable production, and 15 families produced wheat, chana and mustard.

For maintenance of the pumps, a Village Fund (*Gram Kosh*) has been established.

9) **Present Status of the Saving Groups**

S.No.	Name of the Group	Village	Panchayat	Members	Total Amount collected
1	Rupanmata SHG	Kuran	Kuran	26	12,750
2	Chetna SHG	Kuran	Kuran	10	4,500
3	Mahadev SHG	Kuran	Kuran	10	4,500
4	Bajrang SHG	Kurka	Koyalawav	20	7,300
5	Mahadev SHG	Kurka	Koyalawav	12	600

Case Study- Kamli Bai



Kamli Bai has been involved in the Organization (Sanghathan) for 4 years, and she goes on to tell me the interesting way in which she happened to come upon it and get involved. She was going to get wood and passed by a meeting. She stood in the background listening and decided she was interested in the kinds of issues that were being discussed. She spotted a neighbor amongst the group and later approached her to see if she could attend as well. She instantly became an active member in the group. She describes herself as a changed person; she says she was reluctant and afraid by nature and now she is a vibrant, confident well-informed person. She has also been heavily involved in the implementing of the PC Scheme. She

has personally got involved both in the gooseberry (amla) plantation and has a vermicompost unit along with having field bunding constructed around her land among the other general activities.

Gooseberry (Amla)- this is something that requires much water; she confesses that, that is something she does not have. However she does have access to it and walks and brings enough everyday from a neighboring well in order to provide the right conditions to her amla plants, which are alive and well. She says she treats them like her own children and likens them and their care to that of the relationship between a mother and her children. She is committed and highly determined.

Vermicompost- this is something she admits to have been very reluctant to try. Having received much information on its benefits and how to produce it, she was not completely convinced. However she decided to give it a try, if it really did what people claimed it did, it would be of great benefit she thought. After having set up her unit, she decided to first try it on the moong - this was only a small portion of her field and thus no risk as such. This turned out nicely, and then she decided to put it in the corn, and it grew beautifully too, they required no extra watering at all. She describes how she would climb high on a hill to see her field and admire her

crop. Other people are now asking her what her secret is and requesting the worms to start a unit of their own.

Her maize crop would in previous years produce some 20 kg and this would barely feed her and her family for 2 weeks. This year, her yield was well over 700 kg, ensuring food for her and her family. Since then she has tried it on her chickpeas too and anticipates a good yield.

Kamli Bai is a good example of someone who has taken the initiative to get involved and thus has reaped the benefits both financially and personally. She is very active in the decision-making and implementation process of the Sanghathan, and in the PC Scheme. She acknowledges an improvement. She says that she accepts that life will never be easy but also that it was never meant to be, and she is happy to work hard. In the past, however, her hard work would not always give her financial and food security and she didn't feel she was getting enough for her efforts. But now she feels that with the changes that have happened, she will at least be more secure and her hard work will finally pay off.

Flooding:

Many people were affected adversely due to the excessive rains in the 2006 monsoon. They lost their houses, animals, machines, land etc. So, a memorandum was given to the SDO and Chief Minister to provide compensation to 332 families. In Rotiya, 90%-affected people were provided compensation for their losses due to heavy rainfall. Due to the pressure of the Organization, in Dewla and Bharla villages, a survey was done by the Patwari (Land Revenue Clerk) and the government was informed about the extent of the damage in the village and the numbers of people affected.

Animal Health Camp:

In the month of August, 2006, the Gorward Adivasi Organization helped to organize an animal treatment camp at Kakradi and Koyalawav, with the support of the Nana and Beda animal hospitals. Animals (Sheep and goats) suffering from diarrhoea and hoof disease were treated. 4,000 sheep and goat were vaccinated.

Right to Information:

The Organization is working to make people at the village and Block level, understand various government schemes and laws. Using the RTI Act, people took information about

- the number of people affected by heavy rainfall in Goriya and Nana Panchayat.
- Musteroll copies and amounts spent for the construction of the school building at Luni.

Education:

The region is quite backward in terms of education. The Association motivated 50 girls to take part in the Total Education Campaigning (" Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan") and got 31 boys registered for the bridge course.



Gorward Mela (Annual Convention 2007):

The Gorward Mela was organized in the tribal area of Gorward in "Kuran" village, on the 22nd of February, 2007. About 2000 people participated in the Convention from various organizations from Bali, Desuri, and from Southern Rajasthan - from Dungarpur, Banswara, Udaipur, Sirohi, Rajsamand and Ajmer. Various groups from different villages reached the venue singing songs and shouting slogans. Various exhibitions were organized giving information about pedal pumps for small lift irrigation, soap and surf making, use of minor forest produce, education, health, watershed, vermicompost etc.

The coordinator of the Tribal Development Forum (Adivasi Vikas Manch) was invited as chief guest. People were enlightened through puppetry by the MKSS. It was observed that lack of knowledge among the tribes deprives them of the benefits through various Government schemes, and that officers and politicians procure the benefits. People were made aware about the importance of voting and need of understanding Government schemes. The Panchayats of Bali were not listed under Schedule V, and are not being provided Tribal Area Development Agency facilities, even though the conditions of the tribes of Bali and Desuri were similar to that of Kotra and Jhadol – areas that are listed under Schedule V.

The NREGA was discussed, and it was decided that Pali District would campaign for inclusion in the work of the Employment Guarantee Act, and the people would bring their demand to the attention of Government through campaigns and sending postcards. (As follow-up, after the Convention, people sent 297 postcards {from Malnu, Kuran, Koyalawav, Kurka, Chiktabhata and Maldar} to the Prime Minister asking that Pali District be included in the list of Districts selected for the implementation of the Act.)

People came to know about the Public Distribution System, and the fact that they could ask the Ration dealers for their rights.

The need to protect Natural resources was also raised.

The Convention ended up with traditional religious songs (Bhajans) in the morning the next day.



THE ASSOCIATION OF STRONG WOMEN ALONE

(Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan- ENSS)

Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan (The Association of Strong Women Alone) was formed in January, 2000 and works for the rights of low-income widows and separated women. **In the year 2006 – 2007 the Association of Strong Women Alone worked in 82 Blocks in 26 Districts. There are 20,164 members in the Association.** They get motivation to stand against and change caste and community customs, which marginalized them. They are made aware about the government schemes and how to procure benefits from them.

This has been a year of consolidation, and of maturing of the organization. The expansion of the work has mostly been in numbers of members, and in the outreach to other states. The special things that have happened are noted below.

Preparation for Greater Independence – With a special contract with HIVOS, and an experienced consultant from Hyderabad (Shashi Rajgopalan), about 40 of the key women leaders of ASWA are working through a series of 12 training programmes to prepare them for that greater independence. The courses have started in this period, and training for women on financial management was held from 21-24 Jan.'07 with 25 participants and from 12-15 March with 15 participants, at the Astha Training Centre near Udaipur. After the trainings, the women will now be able to understand the books of accounts, and know what needs to be done, and can monitor an accounts clerk who will be employed by them. Also in the series of trainings: budgeting, membership issues, rules and regulations of the organization, structure, proposal writing.

Leaders as Workers – A system of reducing the number of Astha workers, and increasing the number of Association workers, was taken forward in this year. For one year, we tried an experiment, whether strong State Level Committee members could be effective workers taking the lead in relation to Block Level Committees. What we found, in most cases, was that the selected Association workers were much stronger than the average NGO worker! And so, with the Executive Committee, it was decided to expand this number. Now, there are 21 State Level Committee members who are taking responsibility for the work of their own Block and up to 2 more Blocks. The Block work is growing stronger with their help – problems are being solved, counseling in the field is going on. And the Association workers are themselves expanding the work into new Blocks!

Block Committee Meetings- Block level meetings are held monthly. The members are given information about new Government Schemes, new policies etc. The problems of members are also discussed. The follow up of the previous meeting is taken up.

The newsletter published, “The Voice of Women Alone” (“**Ekal Nari ki Awaz**”) is read and discussed.

Block Committee Members Training

Block Committee Members Trainings are organized for four days for capacity building of the members. During these trainings, various Resource persons from Government Departments and from the legal profession are invited. Local study tours of the District headquarters are organized for awareness, discussions are held on women’s health, land rights, etc. On the last day, cultural activities are organized and women perform activities against social customs like widows applying henna to their hands (mehandi), and cosmetic coloured dots in the middle of their foreheads (bindi). The women participants perform Role Plays, showing in story form, how to take up different issues like land rights or other problems that they face. Various trainings this year were-

- 24th –27th May, 2006, the training was held at the Astha Training Centre. Members from Pratapgarh, Gadi, Anandpuri, Gogunda, Girwa Block Committees participated.
- 4th to 7th June, 2006 at Jodhpur. Members from Mandor, Osia, Phalodi Blocks in Jodhpur District, from Ahore Block in Jalore District and Karchi Block in Pali District participated.
- 23rd to 26th February, 2007, at Jat Dharamshala, Pushkar, District Ajmer. Members from Masooda, Javaja, Kishangarh, Arai and Silora Blocks of Ajmer District participated.

District Level Committee Meetings - The meetings are held 3 times a year. 4 Members from each Block come to the meeting and present the report. The members discuss the problems and share the achievements. The problems which remain unsolved in the Block level meeting, are brought to the District level meeting. The District Level meetings are held in all 26 Districts, 15 days before the State Level meeting.

State Level Committee Meetings – These meetings are held 3 times in a year. All 26 Districts send 3 members, who present reports about the work, the members, the issues in their District to the State level meeting. They discuss about the changes in policies, they plan for future programmes and discuss the problems that remain unsolved at Block and District levels. They prepare for rallies, training programmes, meetings with Ministers and senior Administrative Officers, and make rules and regulations for the Association.

State level meetings were held on

- 24 –25 June 2006, at Jhalawar District headquarters
- 25- 26 November 2006 at Jaisalmer in the Thar Desert
- 10-11 March 2007, in Jaipur (one meeting a year is always held in the state capital, so a press conference can be held, and lobbying and advocacy can be done with the government if needed).

The Executive Committee of the Association and of the Organization --

Executive Meetings: There is an Executive Committee of 11 Strong Women Alone. Executive Meetings are held at least thrice in a year, and more meetings can be held if needed. The Executive is the leadership group of both the unregistered mass-membership Association of Strong Women Alone, (the Sangathan) and also of the smaller registered body, the Organization of Strong Women Alone, (the Sansthan) .

Executive Meetings were held on

- 10th and 11th June 2006, in Kota,
- 25th of June, at Jhalawad
- 8th of July 2006 at the Astha Training Centre,
- 15th August, 2006 at Jhalana Dungri, Jaipur.

Executive Committee Members Training- was held at Vrindavan from 15th – 17th September 2006. The objectives of the training were-

- 1) To gain clarity on the Role of Committee members
 - a) For the Association- Keep records, Analyse, prepare and organize State Level Members meetings (thrice in a year)

- b) For the Organization - Keep records, prepare budget for the programmes planned by the Association, collect funds for programmes, prepare financial reports, apply for registration under the FCRA, Income Tax Act, etc., analyse and monitor the work done by the Organization and the Association.
- 2) To gain clarity on the role of the various Committee members and leaders and to plan for their capacity building
- 3) To plan how the Executive Committee Members of the Rajathan Association can help to strengthen the Role of Executive members of ENSS in other states- Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat
- 4) To plan for Lobbying – at the Block, District, State and National Level, including planning for the training to increase the women’s capacity to do effective lobbying,
- 5) To identify the problems occurring in the work done by the Association
- 6) To get clarity on the role of Astha in relation to ENSS - I year, II year and III year.
- 7) To learn from / with Shashi Rajgopalan about - How ENSS can get much more mature and be more independent
- 8) To decide whether, and who, would participate in the Indian Social Forum to be held in Delhi, from 9-12 November 2006? If yes, then who and how many?
- 9) To plan for the ENSS office inauguration at Kota.



Women Empowerment Day (1st June 2006)-

Every year this day is celebrated all over the state in 26 districts in 82 blocks. People from all categories – single women, married women, children and men and concerned officials and citizens were invited. The meetings were followed by a rally, or sometimes, the rally was followed by a meeting! A memorandum was given to a relevant Block Official, demanding an increase in the widow pension, free medical facilities for widows, BPL-type medical cards to be made, bus passes for ENSS leaders, changes in pension rules, priority in BPL lists, and on other regional problems.

Women's Day was celebrated on 8th March, 2007, in 17 Blocks

Participation in Regional and National Events

1) 7th National Convention of the Independent Women’s Movement Organizations, Kolkatta --

The Convention of the Autonomous Women’s Movement groups Convention was held from 9th – 12th September, at Salt Stadium, Kolkatta. There was a booth to explain about ASWA¹⁴ and the Jharkhand Association of Empowered Women Alone also joined them in managing the booth. The objectives were to discuss about and find solutions to various problems like- increasing religious riots, patriarchy and religious customs, Globalization and its effect on development, control policies,

¹⁴ ASWA – The Association of Strong Women Alone, acronym

corruption in the state administration, etc. Women were in favour of Religious harmony and of accepting the diversity (unifying the country) and not accepting division. 3500 women participated in the Convention. Issues were discussed in different workshops and films were screened on a variety of women's problems and feminist themes.

The workshops were on different subjects-

- ❖ Women working in agriculture fields
- ❖ Unorganized women
- ❖ Women working without any wages – the invisibility of women's work if it is not paid work
- ❖ Women's different problems, due to differences in caste and community
- ❖ Rehabilitated Women who had been displaced from homes and livelihoods
- ❖ Sex Workers
- ❖ Women facing State Violence
- ❖ Handicapped / Specially Abled Women
- ❖ Women survivors of violence after great struggle.
- ❖ Lesbians and Trans-Sexual people (whose sexuality is not defined)
- ❖ Migrant Women
- ❖ Dalit Women

2) **The Indian Social Forum --**

From ASWA, 5 members travelled to Delhi, for **the Indian Social Forum** (9-13 November, 2006). The theme – "Another World is Possible" – future approach.

The objective was to try to learn about and understand the larger forces affecting the poor in India, and to meet other People's Organizations of struggling people on a variety of issues and to learn from them. Through various workshops, and from exhibition booths, it was possible to learn about: violence against women, debt (large and small), the Right to Information Act, the Employment Guarantee Act, forest land, Child Labour, globalization, and also the role of children, youth and women in the struggle for better health protection and medical facilities, and in struggles against poverty. Cultural programmes also taught them, even though they were sometimes in different languages. The Social Forum is a place for People's Organizations to gain strength and to feel encouraged that indeed, "a new world is possible" where there is equality, rule of law and truth.

3) **National Workshop on Muslim Personal Laws --**

From the 6th – 9th December, 2006, at Mumbai, the Women's Research and Action Group (many of whom are themselves divorced, widowed, separated women) organized a workshop, looking at Muslim customs around marriage, divorce, maintenance, property rights, child custody, etc. The conference was attended by 2 Association workers.

At Udaipur Cluster the major achievements were:

- There were 10 land related cases out of these 5 have been solved and others are in process of being solved.

- 12 cases of atrocities against women, out of which 8 cases have been solved.
- Members of ASWA have been associated with different government schemes, in particular, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act works in the selected Districts of: Banswara, Dungarpur, Udaipur, Sirohi, Karauli, and Jhalawar.
- Hundreds of Pension forms were filled in, and well over 100 were sanctioned.
- Due to the awareness spread amongst members of ASWA about the Below Poverty Line lists, many widows and separated women got their names on the BPL lists.
- Most areas of Rajasthan had good rains in the 2006 monsoon, but not all did, and drought affected certain Districts. The members of the Association used their scanned and copied letters of the government's order that low incomewidows and separated women must get priority in government drought relief works.
- Two Sarpanchs of Bundi District of Taleda Block donated Rs. 3000/-, which were deposited in Association bank account.
- There were 2 re-marriages of widows which were supported by the Association.

Lobbying Successes, and Policy Changes Affecting ASWA Members

While the present state government has not been very responsive to initiatives and petitions of the Association of Strong Women Alone over the past 3 years, nevertheless, in the Budget Session of the State Assembly in March, there was some good news for Association members:

- Increase in widow pension from Rs.250 to Rs. 400. Two years ago, in response to the Association's lobbying for an increase in the widow pension to Rs. 1,000 per month, the government had granted 10 kilos of free grain to all widow pension holders. For one year, nothing happened, and then a delegation of ASWA went to Jaipur, visited the Social Welfare Department, the Civil Supplies Department (overseeing ration shops which issued grains), and the Finance Department. Then the grain started to be given. Then, after one year, no more grain was given, and in its place, the pension was increased to Rs. 250. That was for about 6 months only. Then, this 2007 Budget session raised the pensions to Rs. 400 per month. The ASWA demand is still Rs. 1,000.
- Widow Remarriage was supported – at the time of the remarriage of a widow, Rs. 15,000 would be given by the government to the widow.
- There already was a government scheme to provide Rs. 675 per month to the caregivers of children whose father and mother had both died. In this Budget session of the Legislature, a new ruling was made: widows who are the caregivers for their children, were eligible for Rs. 675 per child per month, so long as the child was in school. This will be a big help to younger widows.
- ASWA had already spread awareness about the provisions of the NREGA in the 6 Districts in the first listing of selected Districts (Banswara, Dungarpur, Udaipur, Sirohi, Karauli, Jhalawar). 6 new Districts have been selected for this rural employment scheme - Tonk, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Chittorgarh, Sawai Madhopur, Chittorgarh and Jalore. ASWA has Block Committees which meet monthly, in Blocks of all these 12 Districts.
- ASWA had lobbied for “bus passes” for free bus travel on state roadways buses, for the leaders of the Association. Thousands and thousands of rupees are spent every year as leaders move around to attend meetings, deal with atrocity cases,

counsel in-laws, take petitions to the Block and District headquarters, etc. However, in this year's budget, the demand was not met, However, a Budget provision was that 6 or more women travelling together on roadways buses would get a fare concession of 25%. This will help women all over the state, in attending training programmes, and large meetings.

Case Study

My New Life: A Boon from the Association – Razia

Ruksana, wife of late Mohammed Jafri is a poor widow of Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur. She has six children. One of her daughters, Razia, had problem in the valve of her heart and being poor, could not get the treatment done. Ruksana put the matter in the Jaipur City monthly meeting of ASWA. The Committee members discussed Razia's problem, and members of the Committee went to SMS Government Hospital and met Dr. K. K. Kushwah, a heart specialist, and told him about the Association of Strong Women Alone, and about the case of Razia. The doctor decided to treat Ruksana's daughter without charging any money. He met the Hospital Incharge (Superintendent) and arranged for Razia's operation on the 20th of October, 2006. Razia got operated and the Jaipur City Committee members helped to take care of her by visiting her, one by one, and gave strength to Ruksana. Today Razia is healthy and says that she is alive because of the efforts of the women of the Association of Strong Women Alone.

The Supporting NGO Scenario Changed

-- For the first 6 years of the work of the Association of Strong Women Alone (ASWA), there were 2 supporting NGOs, Astha as the lead NGO, and another NGO based in Kota, eastern Rajasthan. Because of the size of Rajasthan, the Kota Cluster of Blocks and Districts covered the eastern and northern portion of the state, and the Udaipur Cluster covered the southern and



Press Conference in Jaipur, March, 2007

western portion of the state. But in July 2006, the Kota based NGO suddenly pulled out of the work. Quite quickly, Astha had to pick up the NGO support work responsibilities for the whole state. A Regional/Field Office of the Association of Strong Women Alone was opened in Kota in August 2006, and inaugurated on the 29th of September 2006. Over 100 people participated, amongst whom were the Kota Superintendent of Police, Media persons, and people from other organizations. The work is proceeding smoothly; and the Association worker-members have taken a lot of responsibility. The Association continues to be strong!

Extension to Other States of Work with Widows and Separated Women

The Association of Strong Women Alone, Rajasthan had held a large Convention of low-income Widows and Separated Women in October 2004, and from other states of North India, had invited selected NGOs and widows/separated women from their state. As a result of the exposure to the work of ASWA, several states asked for help in getting some work going in their state, with widows and separated women. Jharkhand and Himachal Pradesh were two of those requesting help to get going.

Jharkhand State:

The contact NGOs who had attended the 2004 convention started the work by doing a survey of single women in Jharkhand.

The objective of the survey was to know the status of single women in the State, to understand their problems and the reasons for their being single, to find out what support they were receiving from society and from the Government. To begin the work, data was collected from 37 Block wide meetings of widows and separated women in 16 Districts. In total, 6000 women participated in these 37 meetings. These meetings were organized from August to October 2005, by 37 Non Government Organizations in 16 districts namely-

Bokaro,	Dhanbad,	North Singhbhum
South Singhbhum,	Saraikela,	Hazaribagh,
Chatara,	Kodarma,	Giridih,
Ranchi,	Lohardaga,	Devghar,
Jamtada,	Simdega,	Latehar,
Gadva.		

The women were between 20 and 70 years of age. Their problems covered social, economic, legal, health and safety problems, like -

- Not getting support from the in-laws
- Physical exploitation
- Mental atrocities
- Property snatched
- Financial problems
- Considered Inauspicious and called a witch
- Not getting support from son and daughter-in-law
- No benefits from Government Schemes
- Separation from husband due to delivery of girl child
and so on.

After the work had started in Jharkhand, it was decided to start work in the 37 Blocks of 16 Districts, more specific data was collected from January to March 2006. Out of the women surveyed-

- 3,459 women are Widows
- 742 women are separated, unmarried, divorced,
- 3,710 women (53%) have the responsibility of children
- 4,155 women (59%) have the responsibility of children as well as the family
- 588 women are receiving some Government benefits

The Association of Empowered Women Alone (Ekal Nari Shashakti Sangathan) Jharkhand is now established and working in 16 of the 22 Districts of the state. The structure of the Association is set up – State Level Committee, 37 Block Level Committees, and 2 NGOs are supporting with training and organization. Cases are dealt with, government officials are met

about different issues, press conferences are held and press coverage is good. Key women leaders of the Rajasthan Association of Strong Women Alone continue to travel to Jharkhand as resource persons in state level meetings, and for Block Committee Members Trainings.

In the past year,

State Level Committee Meetings were held 3 times, and Rajasthan women attended the August 27-28, 2006 meeting. The meeting was held at Jan Vikas Bharti Kendra (People's Development Centre) at Hazaribagh. 60 Jharkhand members participated.

Block Committee Members Trainings

24th – 27th April 2006 at Jamshedpur -- in which 108 members participated. The objective of the training was to understand and analyse the root causes of the problems of single women, the role of Block Committees, and to get information about government schemes, the Employment Guarantee Act, the new Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, other legal information etc. The government and political structure was also explained. The members of the Block Committees were also trained to do counseling work at the village level with single women.

7th to 10th September 2006 at Hazaribagh -- 71 women participants were there from 7 Blocks of 4 districts. Information was provided about various schemes, legal information and the administrative structure.

Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh is a relatively small state, but the terrain is difficult – rugged high mountains, few roads, snowfall in winter. The Association is working in 8 Districts and 19 Blocks throughout the state. Gram Panchayat Level Meetings (200) are meeting monthly, Block Level Committees are meeting every 2 months, and the State Level Meetings are held 3 times a year.

Members of the Rajasthan Association of Strong Women Alone attended the Himachal Pradesh Second State Level Meeting of the Association of Strong Women Alone (Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan, Himachal Pradesh) in Shimla at the Agricultural Government Training Centre. 36 members from across the state took part. A press conference was also held.

The Himachal Women Alone formulated some demands on behalf of the 3 lakh women who are living as widows or separated women (the number of widows in the state presently is 2,29,664), and put them to the government. These demands were:

- The need to arrange for employment, permanent means of employment for women from 25 to 40.
- The government has 3 lakh acres of land that has been surrendered to the government after land ceiling adjustments were made. The demand is that this land must be given to needy single women, so that they can leave with respect in the society.
- They demanded that the government provide free medical facilities to women above 40 years of age.

Addressing media person Sangathan Coordinator Nirmala Chandel said permanent means of employment could be achieved by providing women with cultivable land to lead a dignified life along with their children.

In the three days meeting, future strategies were chalked out. There will be a membership campaign to enroll more members.

THE SUPPORT SOCIETY

(The Rajasthan Forest Produce Collectors and Processors Groups Support Society – in short – “The Support Society” and in Hindi, “Samarthak Samiti”)

The Support Society was registered in 1996 under the Rajasthan Societies Registration Act, 1956, with the mission to strengthen peoples groups, cooperatives and organizations which were working on the collection and sale of non-timber forest produce. The Support Society started by being a collective of adivasi tendu leaf cooperatives – helping with credit, and linkages with the market. Slowly, other forest produce collection groups were added, and now the Support Society is working with groups on collection and sale of honey, jatropa (rattan jote), custard apples, green mangoes, jamoon, gooseberries, grass, saphed moosli (a root herb), etc. From time to time, some survey or research work is done, and documentation to strengthen the work of the associated groups and organizations.

The working area of the Support Society includes: Dungarpur Block (Dungarpur District), Beechiwada Block (Dungarpur District), Abu Road Block (Sirohi District), Pratapgarh Block (Chittor District), Akelera (Jhalawar District); also in Udaipur District, the following Blocks – Dhariawad, Kotra, Gogunda, Jhadol and Salumber.

The Work of the Support Society

1. **Promoting Cultivation of MFPs** – Salumber, Kotra, Gogunda, Jhadol and Dungarpur people have been provided with horticulture plants like Gooseberry (Awla/Amla/Aonla), mango and lemon from the Support Society plantation fund.
2. **Promoting Exhibition cum Sales Booths of MFPs at Big Events** – People’s groups and organizations were helped to put up a booth at the Dungarpur NREGA programme, the Kotra Tribal Development Forum’s Milan Mela, the large women’s convention of the Adivasi Women’s Awareness Society, at programmes and at workshops of UNDP in Delhi and Jaipur, at the Indian Social Forum (ISF) in Delhi, at the Shilpgram Mela in December in Udaipur, and at the Khadi Mela in Udaipur.
3. **Processing of Minor Forest Produce (MFPs)** – Honey processing training was given twice to women of SHGs in Astha. The group members of Patiya and Deola are themselves doing the job of filtration, packing and bottling work at their Honey processing center – village Deola.
4. **Marketing of MFP’s:** Honey (200 kg.) was sold @ Rs.120/kg. A profit of Rs. 8,000/- was earned. Palash (1200 kg.) @ Rs2/kg, a profit of Rs.1,200 was earned and Jatropa (50 quintals) was sold @ Rs. 12/-, a profit of Rs.10,000 was earned. The net profit money is returned to the groups and organizations that did the collection. The Support Society helps with marketing and sales.



5. **Value Addition of MFPs** – Herbal colour making training was given to group and cooperative members. They were also trained to make drinks (tea) from the palash flowers.
6. **Promotion of Vermi Compost:** To improve agriculture, 9 vermi compost units were introduced to some groups in the last year. The number increased to 18 and this year, with 9 new units established in 20 villages. People are using this compost on their fields, and are happy with its result.
7. **Advocacy and Lobbying:** A Memorandum was given to the Collector, Udaipur; the Principal Secretary of Panchayati Raj; and to senior forest officials regarding changes in forest rules regarding collection, marketing and transportation rights of collectors, and for the legalization of collection and sale of MFPs.
8. **Research:** A study is ongoing to identify the indigenous food and food habits of the tribes of South Rajasthan.

Meetings and Trainings

A meeting of the partner's forum for natural resource management was held at the Astha Training Center, Udaipur on World Forestry Day, 21st of March 2007. The objective of the meeting was to discuss on the circular of the government of Rajasthan regarding management of forest produce and the decision to include bamboo in the list of MFPs; and to discuss the provision of the recently passed tribal forest bill for managing forest produces and strategy for raising collection rate of tendu leaves.

Two trainings were organized to improve the harvesting system of Honey. A trained honey hunter of the area taught Ecofriendly and Scientifically harvesting.

There was a staff training programme the 7th of March 2007 at Udaipur to improve their work.

One staff member was sent to FCRA accounts training at Bangalore and another was sent to IIFM¹⁵, Bhopal for NTFP livelihood training.



Tendupatta Cooperatives –

The Rajasthan Tribal Federation, the “Rajas Sangh”, case: The Rajasthan Tribal Area Development Cooperatives Federation in Udaipur had filed a case against the Tendu Leaf Cooperative Societies of Kotra and Pratapgarh, regarding outstanding loan repayments. The reason the tribal cooperatives could not repay the loans, was that the Tribal Federation officers had spoiled the marketing of the leaves in that year, and the leaves were sold at a loss. The Federation was demanding a lot of money -- as per the notice, the principle amount as on 31.3.99 for Kotra was Rs. 40,82,483 and for Pratapgarh it was Rs. 78,04,575. With interest, it was calculated to be Rs.99,67,584 (Rs. 58,85,101 interest) for Kotra, and Rs. 1,77,58,213.20 (Rs. 99,53,637.42 interest). The case was heard by the Joint Registrar of

¹⁵ IIFM – Indian Institute of Forest Management

Cooperatives, and her judgment was that case was not valid as it was not filed within the time limit of six years. The cases were dismissed!

Tendupatta Tender: - For the year 2007, the tender for Units was held on February 1st -2nd. The tender amounts were very high, 7 to 10 times more than the last year! The Tribal Cooperatives submitted tenders for 7 Units, but they did not get any success.

Networking: -

Non-pesticides management initiative is started at national level where Ford Foundation is taking lead. The Support Society is also a member of this network for South Rajasthan.

The Jaisamand catchments area management initiative – The Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development (SPWD) is taking the lead, and the Support Society is involved in this initiative. The Ford Foundation will be funding the work.

UNDP Project Work

The Support Society has taken up field level project on “**Social Mobilization for Natural Resource Management**”. The Working Area: SHG groups have been formed under the UNDP Project in four blocks of Udaipur District i.e. Kotra, Gogunda, Jhadol and Salumber. There are 20 groups having 424 members.

Under the UNDP Project, The Support Society has carried out the following activities:

a) Meetings

Group Meeting: Each group has a fixed date for their monthly meetings.



Cluster

Meetings:

Representatives of all groups attend this meeting every month. There were 36 meetings.

Cooperative

Meetings:

Each Cooperative held an annual meeting at their office once in the year and

E.C. Meetings when needed. In this period, Dungarpur, Birothi, Kotra, Pratapgarh, Gogunda cooperatives organized their meetings. A new women's cooperative has been started at Gogunda and at Salumber, and they have applied for registration.

b) Awareness Camps

Awareness Camps were organized to give information about the MFP's collection and production, and about household uses of the MFP's. These camps were organized at Birothi – 2, Salumber – 2, Devla – 2, Gogunda –2. More than 100 women participated, and a few men also attended the camps.

A camp was organized at Devla on the 13th of March 2007, to give information about UNDP project activities and to sensitize local government officials about the project's activities. Other topics discussed were the implications of the implementation of SEZ, particularly SEZ projects which would see the Rajasthan government acquire revenue land for the production of jatropha – there is no empty revenue land in Rajasthan – tribal farm families have occupied it for their homestead agriculture work! Also, provisions of various forest laws were also discussed. There were 32 participants.

At Saira on the 14th of February, 2007, 25 participants were made aware about the Tribal Forest Rights Act, sustainable management of forest produce and economic and medicinal uses of plants.

c) Training Programmes:

1. Leadership training was provided twice to strengthen the knowledge of the groups. 124 women participated.
2. Literacy training was given to 23 key members of the SHGs from 10-20th January 2007, at Udaipur.
3. A training programme on goat rearing was held on the 12th of March 2007 at Udaipur. 15 women participated.



d) Exposure Visits

To learn from other experienced groups, members visited

1. Prayas (Deogarh, Chittorgarh District)- to meet with a Bamboo Craft group.
2. Milan Mela Kotra- to learn how to organize.
3. Gujarat Forest Development Corporation, Baroda – to see a project of processing and marketing of medicinal herbs, on the 6th of March, 2007
4. Jagaran Jan Vikas Samiti, Kurabad - to provide a practical exposure to the SHG members about the cultivation and use of medicinal plants. There were 40 participants.
5. Prayatna Samiti, Bambora, Girwa Block - to see first hand successful buffalo and goat rearing work (13th March 2007) 40 participants.

e) Workshops and Seminars:

- Strengthen NTFP based livelihoods workshop – Organized by SPWD New Delhi was held on 29th August 2006. The Support Society made a presentation in the workshop.
- NRM by communities – a workshop organized by FES, Udaipur was held on 3rd Feb. 2007. The Support Society made a presentation.
- Annual review meeting and workshop for the UNDP project New Delhi was held on 18-19 October 2006. The staff participated.

- A national level workshop was organized by the Support Society at the Asha Training Centre, Udaipur, on 16 – 18, June, 2006. Over 65 participants from M.P., Maharashtra, Karnataka and Rajasthan attended the programme.

SUPPORT UNITS

The Administrative Support Unit

The Documentation Support Unit

The Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Support Unit

The Training Centres

The Administrative Support Unit, the Documentation Support Unit, the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Support Unit (PME), and the Training Centres are all part of Astha which support the Resource Units and the People's Organizations.

The Administrative Support Unit staff gave support in accounts and did financial planning with the Units and P.O.s. The Unit also managed the inflow of money and payments needed, gave financial statements to the Units and P.O.s about their balances, and gave audited documents and other statements to donors, and government when needed. The Documentation Support Unit supported the Units and P.O.s, as well as other NGOs, People's Movements and Campaigns in Rajasthan, and beyond. A new PME Support Unit was established in this financial year, which began to collect data about the work to help all Resource Units and People's Organizations with their future planning and strategizing. The 2 Training Centres of Astha, in Udaipur and in Kotra, with residential training facilities, were well used by the Astha Team, and by other NGOs and government departments working with the poor.

Administrative Support Unit –

The Administrative Support Unit provided the financial accounting support, the typing and computer support work, and the physical arrangements and other work for the programme staff teams. The following were the activities performed by the Administrative Support Unit:

- Daily basis office management.
- Maintain the books of accounts, and handle banking and financial accounting work, payments, budgets. Financial reporting.
- To manage the Tax Deducted at Source (TDS), Provident Fund and Gratuity Fund debits, Income Tax returns, and other official certificates and accounts reporting on behalf of the organization
- To give active support in organizing the trainings in Accounts, by being resource persons in the trainings.
- Support in purchasing, printing, publications, mail dispatch.
- Computer typing and photocopying of the reports, programme plans, letters, documents and other materials needed by the programme Resource Units and P.Os.
- Human Resource related works, prepare personnel files of staff, issuing office orders, appointments other administrative letters
- Correspondence related work including inward mail and outward despatch.
- E-mail management of letters and reports sent and received
- Management and logistical support for guests / sick people from the field who come to Udaipur for treatment / study tours
- Book rail, bus and air tickets for the staff
- Anything else that is needed!

Documentation Centre Support Unit –

The Astha Documentation Support Unit works with the Resource Units and People's Organizations to support their work through print and AV resources. The Documentation Centre is located at the Astha Training Centre, and so for trainees of various programmes organized at the Centre, the resources of the "Doc Centre" are available. There is a library of books, journals, posters and reports on the issues on which Astha is working. There is an Audio-Visual (AV) section with services of photography, and showings from the video and VCD library, as well as AV equipment to be used in training programmes (overhead projector, microphone, VCD and television monitor, arrangements of LCD, etc.). And the Doc Centre staff helps in the production of Newsletters, booklets, pamphlets, leaflets used in the work of the Resource Units and the People's Organizations.

Publication Work:

- The Documentation Centre gave a lot of help in the production and distribution of 3 editions of Halkara – the quarterly newsletter of the People's Organizations Resource Unit. this year-Halkara (April – June, 2005 edition), Halkara (July - September 2006 edition), Halkara (October – December 2006 edition)
- The Local Self Governance Resource Unit got Doc Centre help for the Newsletter, "Panchayat Jagrookta Samachar" (Awareness and News About Panchayats), August 2006, Issue 10
- The library and AV section provided resource material for publications in other units

Additional Written Support Work:

- 1) Compilation of Press cuttings of news related to Astha
- 2) Publication of the booklet "Ek Astha Ek Vishwas" (One Astha, One Faith), written by Bharat Dogra, a free lance journalist from New Delhi. The Doc Centre provided him with reports, photographs and relevant material
- 3) Press notes – another area of support from the Doc Centre.

Major Events that had Photography and Video Support – Workshop on Rights at Pai, different training programme phases of Aagaz Academy for Local Self Governance, State Level Panchayati Raj Workshop. 29-30 December, 2006. the Social Audit in Udaipur 13 – 20, February 2007, the Women Panch Sarpanch Forum at Rajsamand 17-18 March 2007. Discussion programme with (donor organizations) Aagaz Academy and many other programmes.

A Representative List of Activities of the Doc Centre Staff -- Providing Assistance and Support in the Preparation of Exhibitions During People's Organizations' Forums and Other Training Programmes, Providing Resources to Those Who Visit the Library, etc.

- Assistance during rally and meeting (on the female foeticide) Udaipur from 6-14 August, 2006
- Lamination of posters and preparing new posters
- During the closing of I Phase and inauguration of II phase of Aagaz Academy, on 25-26 August, 2006, gave support in the exhibitions and other work.
- Helped in the exhibitions in the workshop organized by Tribal Women Awareness Forum at Pai on 31st August, 2006

- Gave support in the preparation of exhibition for Milan Mela at Kotra on 22-23 September, 2006, organized by the Tribal Development Forum.
- Participation of Astha in Indian Social Forum at New Delhi from 8-13 November 2006.
- Prepared the Exhibition for the Jagrati Mela (Awareness Camp) organized in Paduna (Girwa) on 21-22, December, 2006
- Support during the Local Self Governance Resource Unit and Aagaz training programme for computer training, giving information about computers and arranging the exhibition from 7-9 February, 2007
- Support for exhibition and its preparation at Bali, District Pali for Godwad Mella on 20-21 February, 2007.
- Arranged for the resource materials and distributed it and organized books exhibition during Legal Aid Workshop on 24-25 February, 2007.
- Support for Data Analysis in Panchayati Raj Micro Planning Workshop on 26-27 February 2007.
- Arrange newspapers and display materials at the Training Centre and the main Astha office, Kharol Colony
- Order books, and make payment for books and journals for the library.

Library/Documentation Centre Resources

Sl. No.	Materials	Numbers
1.	Books (200 New Books)	3326
2.	Magazine, Newsletters, Journals	40 Hindi and 25 English
3.	Posters	660
4.	Video Cassettes	140
5.	Video VCDs	40
6.	Newspapers Cuttings	Two Papers from 1996 – 31 st March, 2007
7.	Reports of Astha's Activities	1986 - 2007

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Support Unit --

A new PME Unit has started this year at Astha. Its main objectives are to improve the quality of reports of all Units/POs so that qualitative and quantitative progress and action can be recorded. The work of the Unit is to help the Astha staff teams to make effective proposals and to identify the indicators.

In the month of July, help was given to prepare proposals for Food Security and the Right to Work for the Livelihood Unit. The PME staff also helped in the preparation of the Astha annual report for the year 2005-06. PME has supported the Rajsamand Women's Forum to write a project proposal. Along with the senior core staff of Astha, the PME staff member attended the meetings with the representatives from Oxfam-Novib which prepared "milestones" and "outcomes" for the work planned. The staff took part in the "PC Scheme Project" of CAPART mid-term evaluation by R.P. Jagid, on 4th November, 2006 at Khuran Village, Bali Block, Pali District. They trained organizations and unit staff in methodology of writing the documents needed. Basic data about the details of the work of the various P.O.s and Resource Units is in the process of being collected.

The Training Centres –

Astha has 2 Training Centres -- 1 in Kotra Block headquarters, Udaipur District, and the second one is the main Astha Training Centre at Chotta Bedla on the outskirts of Udaipur.

The Kotra Training Centre is a resource for the training programmes and meetings of the Tribal Development Forum, and its Support Society (Kotra Adivasi Sansthan). Leadership trainings, issue-base trainings, planning meetings, project implementation meetings and organizational meetings of the Core Committee (Sanchalak Mandal) are often/usually held at the Kotra Training Centre.

The Astha Training Centre at Chotta Bedla, Udaipur provided the training facilities for the Astha Team to organize training programmes and meetings throughout the year – often there was more than one event going on at a time! The Astha Training Centre is also available for other NGOs and organizations to hold their events, so long as the organization is working with and for the poor.

A chart showing the use of the Astha Training Centre, Chotta Bedla, is found on the next page.

Various Programmes Organized at the Astha Training Center, Chotta Bedla

Month	Days of Use	Total Programs	Through Astha	Other Organizations	Participants
April-06	28	9	6	3	371
May-06	26	9	6	3	226
June-06	51	10	4	6	366
July-06	73	16	11	5	486
Aug-06	20	10	7	3	506
Sept-06	12	8	8	-	197
Oct-06	28	11	9	2	341
Nov-06	32	15	9	6	367
Dec-06	60	15	7	8	304
Jan-07	37	13	10	3	408
Feb-07	62	20	13	7	1,058
March-07	36	17	12	5	638
Total	465	153	102	51	5,268

Internal trainings (102): Astha Units and 8 PO's

External Trainings (51): MLPC, Aajivika Bureau, FES, Aarth, Seva Mandir, Marg Sansthan (New Delhi), Aagaz Academy, Funding Agencies (OXFAM etc), Indian Institute of Craft, IIFDC, Exposure trips from Bundelkhand, Jaipur, Ahmedabad and IGSSS.

CONCLUSION

If we take an overall reflection of the work of Astha during the year 2006-2007, we can see that the organization is indeed facilitating some important social processes –

- The struggle of 10 years on the issue of forest land ownership rights for tribal forest dwellers has met with a major success – Astha and the People’s Organizations joined together with other people’s movements, lawyers, NGOs, and were part of the process that led up to the Government of India passing the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act in December 2006. Astha has documented the 10 year Rajasthan struggle in 2 booklets published, one in Hindi and one in English.
- Some of the People’s Organizations started by Astha, are indeed moving towards greater independence – the Support Society working on non-timber forest produce with groups and cooperatives, is almost self-reliant even now. The Rajsamand Women’s Forum has counseling center funding coming directly into their own bank account, not through Astha. A consultant is working with the Association of Strong Women Alone on financial management, planning, making rules explicit, strengthening leadership, as preparatory work for greater self-reliance. There has been progress towards Astha’s overall objective to help the P.O.s be more independent¹⁶.
- The Right to Information Act has been used, and work has been done with the public on how to use it.
- The NREGA and the processes of Social Audit of NREGA works have been a major focus of the work of Astha in the year. Rajasthan hosted the country, in Dungarpur District, in the April 2006 to learn by doing what Social Audit means. Astha and the Dungarpur P.O. which Astha supports were in the thick of the preparation, the padyatra walks, the Gram Sabha feedback, the reporting, and the follow-up. Other Social Audits were done in other Districts in Rajasthan during the year. Astha and the P.O. leaders have now rich experience and manual type documentation on this important aspect of this important national programme of employment.
- The Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre is recognized as a helpful resource, both by civil society organizations and by MLAs in Rajasthan. Important work has been done in the last year on Dalits, Tribals, Widows, Crop Insurance, the Tiny Industry or Production Sector, and by strengthening Democratic Debate in the State Legislature through orientation courses for MLAs, and by helping in preparing strategic questions about budgets and the poor.
- Many of the People’s Organizations are at a stage where they know they are organized and aware – now they cannot be cheated and exploited, dismissed, marginalized, victimized. Now they are wanting help with “constructive work” as in watershed work, income generating work. With this search for what is useful, Astha, with the people, are exploring “alternative development” – vermiculture compost, marketing natural farming onions, collectively marketing honey, etc.

¹⁶ “Independent” is probably not the right word, for “inter-dependence” is really where we are moving. But we are moving towards a greater inter-dependence with the P.O.s being stronger, with more able and articulate leadership, so that our inter-dependent relationship is one of equals relating to each other – they know and can do some things, we know and can do some other things, and together – we can change the world!

- Astha, through the work of the Resource Units, and also some of the P.O.s (like the Association of Strong Women Alone), have moved Astha firmly to be a Rajasthan wide organization, and even nation-wide organization. Strong Women Alone are being organized in Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, with Astha's help. National networks and people's action in New Delhi is influencing Parliament.
- Astha works at the grassroots, with leadership development and with groups and organizations, on struggle and constructive action work. But it also does some work on the "macro" issues, like the Right to Food, Special Economic Zones (SEZ), economic policies of Globalization and Privatization, communal harmony, and female foeticide with its roots in patriarchy. Astha is both "micro" and "macro".

These are just some overview observations and reflections on the work of Astha during the past year. There could be more, there could be some different ones.

Astha is a social development team of workers,
positioned firmly on the side of the poor, exploited, deprived and marginalized –
of which there are too many in this India with its +9% Growth Rate.

We are not pessimistic about the future;
we are not discouraged –
because we see the strength in the men and women with whom we work.

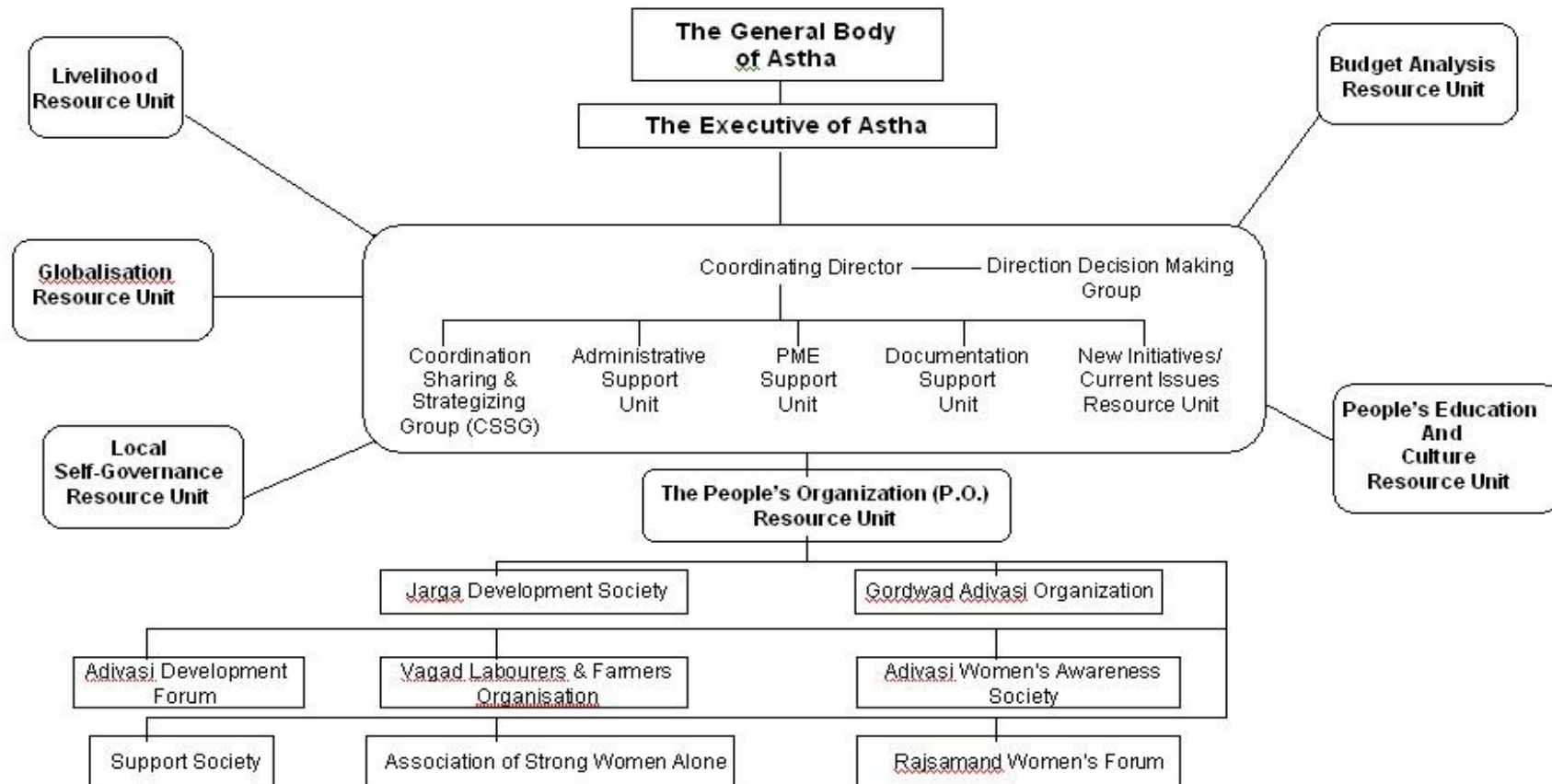
Astha is looking forward to the future –
A Field Based Resource Organization.

Map of Rajasthan



Astha Structure

THE PLANNED STRUCTURE OF ASTHA
FOR THE PERIOD
APRIL 2006- MARCH 2009



List of Staff Members of ASTHA

S.No.	Name	Related to The Work of --	Post
1	Dr. Ginny Shrivastava	Udaipur Administration	Coordinating Director
2	Smt. Sharda Jain	Udaipur Administration	Accounts & Finance Coordinator
3	Sh. Ramesh Paliwal	Udaipur Administration	Administrative Coordinator
4	Smt. Amita Bhati	Udaipur Administration	Senior Accounts Clerk
5	Sh. Shanti Lal Panchal	Udaipur Administration	Accounts Clerk
6	Sh. Manglesh Joshi	Udaipur Administration	Accounts Clerk
7	Sh. Manzoor Khan	Udaipur Administration	Accounts Clerk
8	Sh. A.L. Joseph	Udaipur Administration	Steno (English)
9	Mohammed Imran Sheakh	Udaipur Administration	Computer Operator
10	Sh. Raj Kumar Jalora	Udaipur Administration	Computer Operator
11	Sh. Ganpat Singh	Udaipur Administration	Multipurpose
12	Sh. Mirza Sadaqat Beig	Udaipur Administration	Multipurpose
13	Sh. Ganesh Lal Gacha	Udaipur Administration	Multipurpose
14	Sh. Puree Lal Dangi	Udaipur Administration	Multipurpose
15	Sh. Abdul Rashid	Udaipur Bedla, Astha Training Centre	Training Centre Manager
16	Sh. Rajesh Paliwal	Udaipur Bedla, Astha Training Centre	Multipurpose
17	Sh. Babu Lal Paliwal	Udaipur Bedla, Astha Training Centre	Cook
18	Sh. Bheru Lal Dangi	Udaipur Bedla, Astha Training Centre	Multipurpose
19	Sh. Manohar Singh	Udaipur Bedla, Astha Training Centre	Multipurpose
20	Sh. Ramesh Chandra Meena	Bali, Gorward - PO	Field Organiser

21	Sh. Yajuvendra Kumar Tiwari	Bali, Gorward - PO	Field Organiser
22	Sh. Man Singh Sisodia	Dungarpur, Vagad Labours & Farmers	Field Coordinator
23	Sh. Prem Shankar Paliwal	Dungarpur, Vagad Labours & Farmers	Accounts Clerk
24	Sh. Wagataram	Banswara, Vagad Labours & Farmers	Programme Organiser
25	Miss Parveen Banu	Udaipur ENSS - Widows & Separated Women	Udaipur Team Leader
26	Smt. Chaggi Bai	Ajmer - ENSS - Widows & Separated Women	Programme Organiser
27	Ms. Uma Kacchawa	Jodhpur ENSS - Widows & Separated Women	Programme Organiser
28	Smt. Shanta Garg	Udaipur ENSS - Widows & Separated Women	Programme Organiser
29	Smt. Pawan Kumari	Udaipur ENSS - Widows & Separated Women	Programme Organiser
30	Smt. Chandrakala Sharma	Kota ENSS - Widows & Separated Women	Kota Team Leader
31	Smt. Usha Sharma	Kota ENSS - WiPdows & Separated Women	Programme Organiser
32	Smt. Shabana Bano	Kota ENSS - Widows & Separated Women	Programme Organiser
33	Smt. Laxmi Iyer	Kota ENSS - Widows & Separated Women	Programme Organiser
34	Sh. Nathuram	Kota ENSS - Widows & Separated Women	Multipurpose
35	Sh. Ramesh Nagda	Kelwara, Jarga Development Society - PO	Field Organiser
36	Sh. Nana Lal Meena	Kotra - Adivasi Dovelopment Forum	Field Coordinator
37	Sh. Sarfaraz Shaikh	Kotra - Adivasi Dovelopment Forum	Accounts Clerk
38	Sh. Lehar Singh	Kotra - Adivasi Dovelopment Forum	Multipurpose Worker
39	Sh. Magan Lal	Kotra - Adivasi Dovelopment Forum	Field Organiser (Edu)

40	Sh. Shiv Kumar Acharya	Kotra - Adivasi Development Forum	Field Organizer - UNDP
41	Smt. Shakuntala Pamecha	Rajsamand, RMM - Rajsamand Women's Forum	Coordinator
42	Smt. Madhu Joshi	Rajsamand, RMM - Rajsamand Women's Forum	Field Organiser
43	Sh. K. S. Rathore	Udaipur Forest Produce Support Society	Programme Coordinator
44	Sh. Vijendra K. Katariya	Jhadol, Tribal Women's Awareness Society	Field Organiser
45	Sh. Raghav Dutt Vyas	Udaipur PO Resource Unit	Programme Coordinator
46	Sh. Chandan Jain	Udaipur PO Resource Unit	Programme Coordinator
47	Sh. Ramesh Kumar Singh	Udaipur PO Resource Unit	Field Organiser (Technical)
48	Sh. Kuldeep Jain	Udaipur PO Resource Unit	Programme Coordinator
49	Miss Sunita Kumari	Udaipur PO Resource Unit	Programme Coordinator
50	Sh. Sohan Lal Gameti	Udaipur Literacy	Programme Organiser
51	Sh. Bhawani Shankar Paliwal	Udaipur Literacy	Programme Organiser
52	Dr. Subrata Dutta	BARC - Budget Analysis	Senior Budget Analyst
53	Sh. Vijay Goyal	BARC - Budget Analysis	Budget Analyst
54	Sh. Nagendra Singh	BARC - Budget Analysis	Budget Analyst
55	Sh. Radha Mohan Jogi	BARC - Budget Analysis	Office Assistant
56	Sh. Bhanwar Singh Chadana	Udaipur Livelihood Resource Unit	Programme Coordinator
57	Sh. Shayam Lal Purohit	Udaipur Livelihood Resource Unit	Programme Organiser

58	Sh. Hariom Soni	Udaipur Livelihood Resource Unit	Programme Organiser
59	Sh. Mangi Lal Gurjar	Udaipur Livelihood Resource Unit	Programme Organiser
60	Sh. Ashwani Kumar Paliwal	Udaipur Local Self Governance	Programme Coordinator
61	Smt. Sarita Jain	Rajsamand Local Self Governance	Programme Organiser
62	Sh. Badri Narayan Sharma	Udaipur Local Self Governance	Programme Organiser
63	Sh. Harish Chandra Bhatt	Udaipur Local Self Governance	Programme Organiser
64	Miss Hemlata Verma	Udaipur Local Self Governance	Programme Organiser
65	Sh. Rajendra Kumar Hiloria	Udaipur Documentation Unit	Photographer
66	Sh. Vishnu Joshi	Udaipur Documentation Unit	Librarian
67	Sh. Prem Kumar Luthra	PME Unit	Programme Organiser

Balance Sheet

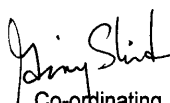
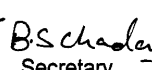
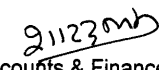
**ASTHA SANSTHAN**

Regd. Office: New Delhi Field Office: Udaipur

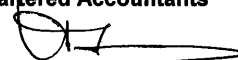
CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH, 2007

Particulars	Schedules	As On 31.03.2007	As On 31.03.2006
SOURCES OF FUNDS			
Reserves & Surplus	I-1 & F-1	32,838,262.48	31,697,336.09
Credit Balances Of Funding Agencies	I-2 & F-2	12,443,060.19	10,570,444.71
Other Liabilities	I-3 & F-3	435,685.00	1,226,204.38
		<u>45,717,007.67</u>	<u>43,493,985.18</u>
UTILIZATION OF FUNDS			
Fixed Assets	I-4 & F-4	9,960,883.25	10,372,566.25
Less: Depreciation		<u>661,893.00</u>	<u>692,230.00</u>
		9,298,990.25	9,680,336.25
Debit Balances Of Funding Agencies	I-5 & F-5	806,032.00	1,297,550.46
Advances	I-6 & F-6	1,745,689.25	1,776,684.25
Cash & Banks	I-7 & F-7	33,866,296.17	30,739,414.22
		<u>45,717,007.67</u>	<u>43,493,985.18</u>

For Astha Sansthan

 **J. Singh**
 Co-ordinating Director
 **B.S. Chadley**
 Secretary
 **21123omb**
 Accounts & Finance Coordinator

In terms of Our Report of Even Date Attached
 For **V. C. Vyas & Associates**
 Chartered Accountants

V. C. Vyas
 Partner
 M.No.9859

Place : Udaipur
 Dated: 11.06.2007



ASTHA SANSTHAN

Regd. Office: New Delhi Field Office: Udaipur

CONSOLIDATED INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED ON 31st MARCH, 2007

Particulars	Schedules	This Year	Previous Year
INCOME DURING THE YEAR			
Grant In Aid	I-8 & F-8	29,034,482.00	25,605,676.91
Donations Received		7,555.58	23,030.00
Bank Interest		1,041,836.72	1,723,543.00
Profit on Sale of Assets		102.00	10,012.00
Other Incomes	I-9	436,287.61	880,516.00
		30,520,263.91	28,242,777.91
EXPENDITURE DURING THE YEAR			
Project Expenses	I-8 & F-8	29,034,482.00	25,605,676.91
Other Expenses	I-10 & F-9	312,227.00	-
Amount Written Off During The Year	I-11	175,142.52	662,061.00
		29,521,851.52	26,267,737.91
Less: Fixed Assets Transferred to Balance Sheet	I-4 & F-4	282,445.00	261,459.00
		29,239,406.52	26,006,278.91
Depreciation	I-4 & F-4	332,265.00	345,253.00
		29,571,671.52	26,351,531.91
Excess of Income Over Expenditure		948,592.39	1,891,246.00
		30,520,263.91	28,242,777.91

For Astha Sansthan

 B. S. Chaudhary 21/11/07
Co-ordinating Director Secretary Accounts & Finance Coordinator

In terms of Our Report of Even Date Attached
For V. C. Vyas & Associates
Chartered Accountants




V. C. Vyas
Partner
M.No.9859

Place : Udaipur
Dated: 11.06.2007

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