

GRASSROOTS

Annual Report | 2005-06



Building Capacities for Social Change ...

food & livelihood security gender equity

tribal rights accountable governance

people's health human rights & peace

child rights environmental conservation



Grassroots India is non-profit development organization committed to strengthening the capacities of grassroots communities and organizations to eliminate poverty, hunger, exclusion, injustice and misgovernance.

Grassroots India ...

**GRASSROOTS INDIA TRUST
GRASSROOTS INSTITUTE
GRASSROOTS MEDIA INITIATIVE**



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trainings & capacity building

Training & Capacity Building Program is one of the main programs of Grassroots. Using 4 modes Grassroots has carried out capacity building: organizing trainings openly for NGOs; field-based capacity building; strengthening the staff of our partners; and building perspectives and capacities of communities in our own field.

Experiences of Grassroots India Regarding Needs of Capacity Building

- ❶ Grassroots level implementing organizations generally lack methodological skills of writing and documenting the results, learning, experiences and solutions applied/evolved;
- ❷ The field staff usually ignores (not deliberately) the socio-cultural & anthropological realities of the communities they work with;
- ❸ Almost all the field organizations and field staff thereof do not understand the importance of science of 'communication' while attempting to mobilize the people, diffuse an innovation (project is set of innovations an organization seeks to assimilate in the community) and appreciate the inherent knowledge of local people.
- ❹ Coming to technical aspects, the field workers often talk much but understand/ analyze less. NGO heads often lack necessary skills/knowledge on technical issues they deal with let alone the field personnel.
- ❺ To strengthen the grassroots action for realizing sustained impacts, it is imperative to build capacities of field staff directly interacting the communities.

Grassroots Institute with the support of Grassroots India Trust organized several trainings in which NGO personnel participated. They are:

<i>Date & Venue</i>	<i>Training</i>	<i>Participants</i>
08-11 August 2005 Chhattisgarh Eye Hospital, Raipur	Project Planning, Proposal Writing and Resource Mobilization	27 from NGOs of Chhattisgarh state
08-10 September Chhattisgarh Eye Hospital, Raipur	Documentation, Report Writing and Dissemination	25 from NGOs of Chhattisgarh state
18-21 September 2005 Gandhi Bhawan, Bhopal	Project Planning, Proposal Writing and Resource Mobilization	17 from NGOs of Madhya Pradesh state
07-08 December 2005 Nagarpalika Bhawan, Jamtara	Case Story Writing	32 from NGOs of Jharkhand state
10-14 January 2006 Rest House, Banjar	Organic Farming	26 farmers and representatives of NGOs of Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal states



On-field capacity building

On-field capacity building remained one of the core areas of activities of GI/GIT during the year 2005-06. The organization supported through this mode of development intervention a lot many grassroots organizations namely:

- » SGSA, Sarguja (Chhattisgarh): 5-10 April'05, 17-19 August'05; 13-15 December'05; 27-28 February'06; 15-17 March'06
- » CREDA, Mirzapur (Uttar Pradesh): 2 April'05
- » SGVS, Sarguja (Chhattisgarh): 3, 12 April'05; 1-5 May'05
- » Lokshakti, Rajnandgaon (Chhattisgarh): 4, 13-15 April'05; 6-9 June'05; 19 July'05; 1-16 August'05
- » Gram Swaraj Samiti, Sonebhadra (Uttar Pradesh): 6-8 May'05
- » Badlao Foundation, Mihijam (Jharkhand): 9-11 May'05
- » Disha Sanstha, North Bastar (Chhattisgarh): 4-5 June'05
- » SIDA, Panna (Madhya Pradesh): 17-18 June'05
- » Sangata, Sarguja (Chhattisgarh): 11 September'05
- » SHARA, Kullu (Himachal Pradesh): 7-13, 30-31 October'05; 1-5 November'05
- » PARDS, Bastar (Chhattisgarh): 15-20 October'05; 10-13 November'05; 12-14 March'06
- » Saathi, Bastar (Chhattisgarh): 11 July'05; 16-17 December'05; 18 March'06

GI/GIT enhanced the capacities of the field staff of the above listed NGOs by visiting the field where the projects of those organizations are under operation. The tasks undertaken by GI/GIT included:

- community outreach,
- designing IEC campaigns,
- understanding people's needs,
- strategizing the future course of action,
- scaling the progress and report writing,
- finding gaps and monitoring,
- planning the projects and writing,
- researching and analyzing,
- policy analysis,



NGOs brush up skills

Staff Reporter
Bhopal

REPRESENTATIVES FROM more than 20 NGOs of Madhya Pradesh polished their communication skills at a workshop organised by Grassroots India Trust, a Delhi based NGO. The workshop concentrated on skills like project planning, proposal writing and resource mobilisation. Hasrat Arjumend, an expert in rural management said, "At least 30 to 40 per cent NGOs lose out on acquiring projects or renewing the existing ones on a

count of poor proposals or loopholes in their final reports. Such an exercise will enable NGOs document their works well." The four-day workshop will conclude on Wednesday with the participants laying their hands on some reports considered to be ideal by the donors or the agencies commissioning the study. Smriti Srivastava, a participant said, "There has been a tremendous growth in the social sector since the past five years so NGOs have also become very competitive. Skills like good

presentation in terms of proposal making, report writing, etc. do give you an edge over the others. Hence such workshops are very helpful for us." Apart from the report writing, proposal making skills the participants would also get to know about Foreign Contribution Regulatory Act and its provisions. Arjumend while elaborating on the workshop said, "Most of the NGOs are not very clear about the concept and the hence face problems in handling foreign funding agencies."

Capacity Building of Partner Organizations & Communities

Grassroots India Trust has developed partnership with Shri Gandhi Seva Ashram (SGSA) and evolved with a campaign called FOOD AND DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN. The field staff

Capacity Enhancement of Grassroots Personnel

Grassroots personnel got exposure at **Community Radio** project of AID INDIA in Garhwa, Jharkhand on 20-21 November 2005. This exposure visit was made by 2 personnel from Grassroots Media Initiative.

Constant training to Chhattisgarh State Coordinator and Program Coordinator (HP) was extended during the year. Moreover, routine monitoring meetings of all the personnel had to take place every 2 months.

involved in the Campaign were oriented and trained in doing mobilization of local people and augmenting the data on critical aspects. This has been accomplished by holding several meetings, sessions in Ambikapur (Sarguja).

Another partnership we developed with Society for Human Awareness & Rural Action (SHARA) to undertake 'women empowerment' project. The field staff and women of SHGs were imparted trainings on: micro-credit, SHG management, micro-entrepreneurship, and community mobilization & reporting.

Research & Studies



Grassroots Institute in association of Grassroots India Trust conducted several innovative and specialist studies. Grassroots India conducted these studies from its own meager resources, except one study on NTFPs that was partially contributed by FYF-UK. The studies have been briefly described.

// NTFPs and Tribal Livelihoods in North Chhattisgarh

Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) do have a large share in household consumptive uses and family incomes of tribes in North Bastar. Majority of the tribal families rely on the supply of NTFPs from forests and their routine life is almost interwoven around the forests and forest products. Study had been concentrated on the livelihood issues (especially people's access to and rights over NTFPs) surrounding nationalized products, which the government buys. Governance concerns have got substantial space in investigations. Instead, the issues of advocacy have been identified in terms of currently unfair trade of non-nationalized NTFPs.

Study suggested that in order to alleviate poverty it is essential to improve livelihoods of tribes based on NTFPs. Two aspects of potential interventions have been suggested: (a) marketing related interventions, and (b) improvement in post-harvest processing. Strategic issues to plan and do advocacy have been grouped into two categories: micro level issues and macro level issues.



From this study, the Occasional Paper #1 has been produced that covers the important sections of the study report, which is available on request. The Paper is an interesting reading.

Chemical intensive agriculture has spoiled major part of cultivable lands in the tropics. Farmers have been under tremendous stress of debt, crop failures, public health risks, and market uncertainties. In such situations, the organic agriculture is the solution. Grassroots on one hand working with farmers in mountains of Himachal Pradesh to adopt organic farming, and on the other hand thought to produce a technical manual. 'Agro Technology of Organic Farming' is a compilation of the organic agronomic technologies. It gives interesting and insightful readings. It is available in soft copy, and can be requested or be accessed on website.

AGRO TECHNOLOGY of ORGANIC FARMING

By Hasrat Arjumend



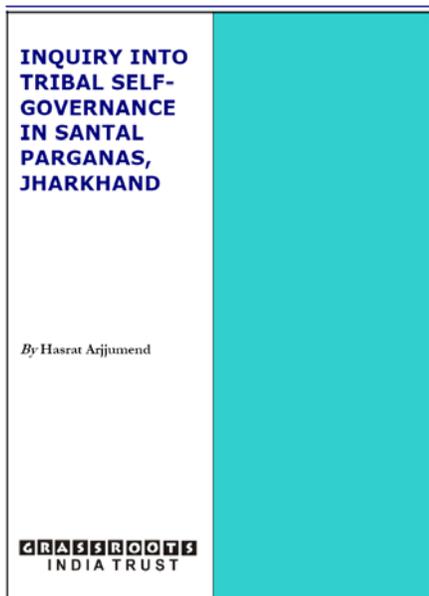
GRASSROOTS INSTITUTE

// Transhumance in Changing Environments of Western Himalayas

Nomads have long been perceived by the settled populations as closed or autarkic social and economic systems confined to 'wild' or 'uncivilized' marginal lands. These negative representations have wrongly devalued the transience and unpredictability of lifestyles of nomads. Widespread misconceptions have branded pastoralists as 'stubborn'. Moreover, shrinking in the geographical extent and demographic sizes of nomadic societies is witnessed. In recent decades, economic and socio-cultural pressure on nomadic lifestyles has resulted in numerous changes in subsistence patterns, the marginalization of traditional territories, an increasing settlement of nomadic groups and accelerated degradation in their environments.



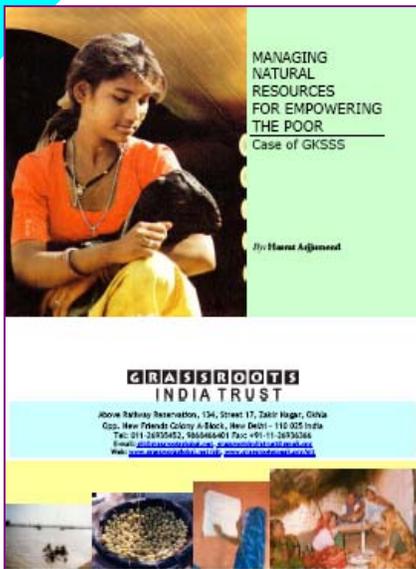
Factors attributed to this are: (1) subjugation of pastoralists by state policies, (2) civilized ideology encourages the sedentarization, (3) military pacification and political control, and (4) recent phenomenon of globalization. There is one more implication of the marginalization process. It is related to the 'citizenship' rights of the nomadic pastoralists or transhumants. A consistent assertion is required for pastoralists to come out of the pathetic situations. There is no pre-set formula for solving this complicated issue interconnected to various factors. Organizing the nomads at local, national and international level is the way out. Brief study conducted in the vicinity of Great Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh on small group of herders suggests all that.



Jharkhand is reported to the tribal groups having their traditional social institutions - called traditional self-governance (TSG) institutions - with a strong concept of democratic participation and governance. With the growing changes in the societies and the formulation of modern governance systems in the country the TSG institutions underwent a decay process. Incorporating inadequately the spirits of PESA, Jharkhand promulgated in 2001 Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act, but owing to bounteous political awakening among dominant tribal groups of Jharkhand any party in power could not dare to announce elections of local bodies. Voice of a section of tribals, who reject the election of panchayat bodies under modern system of local self-governance, contend, 'if PESA rules to constitute PRIs in consonance of traditional, customary, cultural and localized norms of the tribal groups, then what is the necessity of forming new governance institutions in the villages once TSG institutions have already been existing?'. This is the reference point from where Grassroots Institute did this study to look into TSG institutions in the widely changed environments apart from understanding the authenticity of voices raised by tribal groups. Study has concluded that TSG institutions need to be appropriately integrated into PRIs after proper modifications/remodeling. It is advisable from point of view of avoiding undesirable conflicts at micro level and bringing efficiency in the newly constituted PRIs.

// Networking patterns of NGOs in Chhattisgarh

Since the formation of new state of Chhattisgarh the number of NGOs has doubled. Currently about 500 organizations exist in all 16 districts. A sample study was conducted in several districts to understand the networking and communications patterns of the organizations at grassroots level. It was found that networking is guided by 2 big agencies located in Delhi.



Managing Natural Resources for Empowering the Poor

Rural poor especially dalits in Morar block of Gwalior district have been living in persistent poverty partially due to unsustainable management of natural resources like water and land. GKSSS with the support of Indo-Canada Cooperation Office (ICCO) implemented a project under CFLI. During the implementation of project wonderful learnings emerged. It received the attention of Grassroots India for documenting the processes involved, strategies adopted, lessons generated, and people's capacities built. This beautiful piece of the report contains all such descriptions of how the project went on in organizing the communities, planning and managing the resources, distribution of benefits, creating of long-term community assets, and so on. Women empowerment angles are clear and more prominently presented. Organizing the women and nourishing their leadership are really tough task in feudal areas of Gwalior-Chambal region. Grassroots India Trust accomplished the task in about a month.

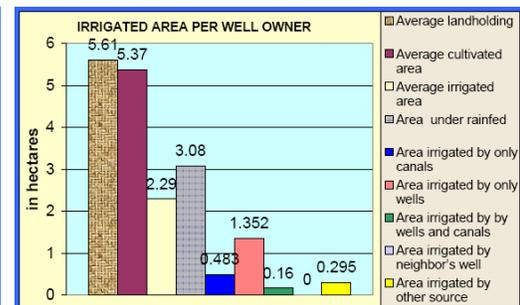
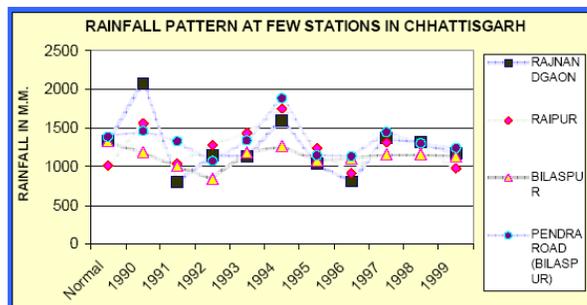
Food & Democracy in Action: A Process Documentation Outcome

"Poor man's life revolves around struggling for two-times bread. The destiny-writers, the government servants and politicians, of poor men curse the obesity they gain out of overeating. How does this gap generate is well understood. Now it is the time to narrow this gap and provide the poor mass with options.options of dying unheard or options of raising voices and knocking the corridors of power and plenty!! Shri Gandhi Seva Ashram (SGSA) is very much into the later option and carrying forward the people's struggle to assert for food and not dying of starvation." These are concluding remarks of the process documentation report of the development action made by SGSA during 2005-06.



Socio-Ecology of Groundwater Irrigation in Chhattisgarh

GIT undertook a groundwater survey and assessed the potential and economy of groundwater irrigation in Chhattisgarh state. Seven locations were surveyed based on the grid in all 16 districts. This study brought about significant recommendation of conserving the groundwater concurrently with the exploitation for irrigation purposes.



20-Ways of Communicating

Particularly the NGOs require tips of what to communicate and how to communicate. The Grassroots India Trust prepared a guiding note for NGOs and distributed among 721 NGOs of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and other states. The 20-points of this communiqué were:

1. News/ Press release and News Media
2. Press Conference
3. Case Stories and its Dissemination
4. Articles, Features, News Articles, etc.
5. Special Communiqués
6. Preparation & Distribution of Selected Documents e.g. annual report, brochure, pamphlets
7. Newsletter
8. Wallpaper
9. Booklets Publishing and Distribution
10. Case Studies and its Publishing
11. Correspondence through Letters
12. Preparation & Dissemination of Audio-Visual Material
13. Getting Special Coverage by Television
14. Independent Website of Organization
15. Releasing E-Magazine or E-Newsletter
16. Membership in E-Groups or D-Groups
17. Research/ Discussion Paper and its Publication in Journals/ Magazines
18. Academia Linkages
19. Placement of Students/ Interns/ Volunteers (with tangible documentary outputs)
20. Participation in Conferences, Seminars, Symposia, etc.

Clipping Service to UNICEF

UNICEF Madhya Pradesh set out campaign on the issue of maternal mortality in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The Communication Department of UNICEF-Bhopal engaged the GMI in collection of press clippings on maternal health topics from 10 prominent newspapers being published in Chhattisgarh. This continued from May 2005 to July 2005. The clippings were submitted to UNICEF every week.

Development Reporting

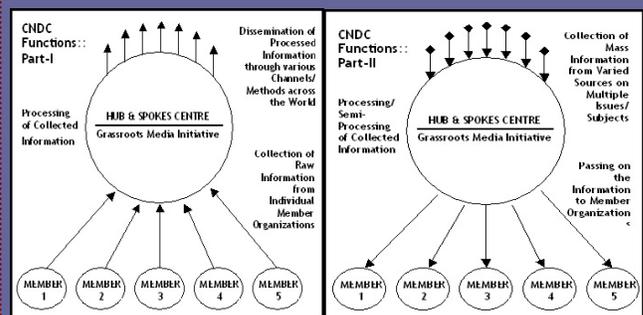
For e-magazine, GRASSROOTSSPEAK *south asia* [www.grassrootsspeak.org], the reporting remained regular phenomenon during the year.

launch of

Cooperative Network for
Development Communication

a collective initiative of grassroots development organizations for media advocacy on people's issues

Considering the significance of communication in promoting the people's issues, various **value-based** and **devoted** grassroots development organizations (NGOs, action groups and people's organizations) have collectively launched the '**cooperative network for development communication**' (CNDC). **Grassroots Media Initiative** coordinates the functions of CNDC. Through CNDC the grassroots development organizations communicate across the world the voices and innovations of local communities, the best practices at grassroots level, and the knowledge generating out of learnings. Simultaneously, the CNDC gathers information principally in digital forms and passes it down to grassroots development organizations and local communities that can use it in improving livelihoods of poor or for asserting people's rights.



Formally launched on 10 February 2006, the CNDC aims at addressing the poverty, hunger, people's rights and exclusion in development processes. CNDC communicates people's issues including MDG issues through media advocacy and information exchange. The issues on which the CNDC works are illustrated below:

- * Food security and livelihoods development
- * Poverty and hunger
- * NRM and sustainable agriculture
- * Education and health
- * Gender equity and women empowerment
- * Local self-governance
- * Child rights and development
- * People's rights including human rights.

At the time of launch Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh were among participating states.

CNDC got its web page:
www.grassrootsglobal.net/cndc

advocacy & networking

Food & Democracy Campaign in Making

What really lies in the roots of visible incidences of starvation deaths and invisible chronic starvation and food deficit/ malnutrition is the gross failure of governance, and unaccountable public institutions are underlying causes of perpetuation of hunger and poverty.



Food and Democracy Campaign has been conceptualized to happen on pilot basis in Sarguja district of Chhattisgarh in association of local partner organization, Shri Gandhi Seva Ashram (SGSA). Campaign was founded on the principle: 'resources and means of food production' are essential for food security in place of being dependent on food aid. The hunger cannot be eliminated or kept away unless the vulnerable families have equitable access to 'means and resources of food production' and or has purchasing power to buy foods from market. Food aid is a patchy solution. The Campaign caught momentum from April 2006 onwards.

Advocacy through New Media

GMI in association of Grassroots India Trust runs a bi-monthly e-magazine for online advocacy on people's issues. It is '**GRASSROOTSSPEAK south asia**', which is available on www.grassrootsspeak.org, and is together e-posted to huge number of individuals/ organizations around the world. The website of the e-magazine was launched by February 2006. The theses of focus are: Agriculture and livelihood, Tribal issues and ethnic identity, Land, water and other natural resources, Food and hunger, Displacement and eviction, Health and education, Forests and environment, Dalits and human rights, Development action, Labour and migration, Globalization and poverty, Law and governance, and Women & children.

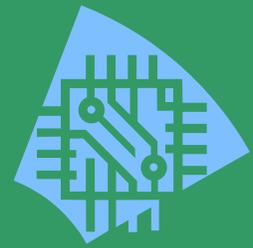
Gender Resource Centre in Panna

Looking at the enormity of violence against women at home and outside particularly in the rural areas of Madhya Pradesh, the Gender Resource Centre was constituted. It was formed in early 2006. Intensive activities are going on in Panna district (on pilot basis) in which the local partner organization, Samvedna Integrated Development Association (SIDA), has been involved. GIT has been acting as coordinating and capacity building agency.

Networking

Grassroots India has strengthened its network in many states of the country like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar and Delhi. The Grassroots has enormous database of the NGOs operational in these states. With large number of NGOs a firm relationship is being maintained. The single objective behind networking is extending solidarity and assistance.

International Solidarity



Observation of International Days

Grassroots India observed World Environment Day 2005 in Banjar town of Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh. A lecture was delivered by Mr. Chunilal in Government College, Banjar to sensitize the youth students for preservation of local environment. About 175 students took part in the lecture.

On Gandhi Jayanti, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, and also the Foundation Day of Grassroots India, the Board meeting was organized in order to discuss the future course of action on the principles of non-violence. It was on 2 October 2005 held in New Delhi.

Participation

Grassroots India participated and extended the solidarity in the following programs:

- Community Radio program at Garhwa (Jharkhand) was visited on 19-20 November 2005
- 'Swabhiman Nepal: National Conference on Telecentres' was attended on 23-25 November 2005 in Kathmandu
- Planning meeting of National Himalayan Niti was attended on 24-25 January 2006 at Chamba in Himachal Pradesh
- State level conference of UN Millennium Campaign's 'Wada Na Todo Abhiyan' was attended on 25-28 January 2006 in Patna (Bihar)

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