



Annual Report

2013-2014

Nirantar Trust, New Delhi

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Introduction

This year, as Nirantar, we completed twenty years of our work. There was much to celebrate and showcase of Nirantar's areas of work that are exemplar and innovative. The two-day event on April 11th- 12th had nearly 250 participants that included members of SSK, KL, our partner organisations, academics, members of the women's movement, friends. While we were planning and preparing for the celebration to mark the last twenty years of our work, we were also working on the future of the organisation.

At the start of the year, we began our strategic planning process. While work on this was initially slow, it caught pace in August and September. All work areas came together and had initial meetings to identify individuals and organisations to consult for the process of the planning, as well as a list of questions to ask them. All those who were consulted gave us their time and important inputs despite their busy schedules. These meetings and their outcomes will be important for the future strategies of the organisations.

In the first six months Nirantar took on many new projects over and above its existing work. Many organisations such as PACS and IPE global approached Nirantar to conduct gender trainings with them. Both of these trainings will happen over 8 to 10 months. The good news is that both these organisations wish to integrate gender into their work and build capacities of their leadership on issues of gender.

In this year, Nirantar took on two mapping studies funded by American Jewish World Service (AJWS). One is sexuality mapping and the other is a mapping of child marriage in India. Both of these studies were taken on for Nirantar's own learning and in order to understand the linkages between these issues and gender, education and sexuality. Through this process, we hope to inform AJWS's strategies on these issues.

For the child marriage mapping study, a bidding process was set up in which other organisations such as ICRW, CHSJ, CREA, Anandi and other organisations had submitted proposals. Because Nirantar is not perceived as a research organisation, preparing for the bid took a lot of work, and when we succeeded in the bid, the effort seemed worth it. Work on this study

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has started because it is a short-term study. Temporary researchers have been hired for this study to build a team to enable quick work on the project. Many people in Nirantar were engaged with the early marriage mapping exercise. Field visits, analysis, writing, several rounds of presentations and a national level consultation have been organized in this time. The effort was extremely insightful and organisationally we learnt a lot. The process and its results have been appreciated by AJWS and other agencies that are looking forward to go through the findings of our study, which is now over. During the study, many people in Nirantar were engaged with in different capacities. Field visits, analysis, writing, several rounds of presentations and a national level consultation were organized in this time. The effort has been extremely insightful and organisationally we have learnt a lot. The process and its results have been appreciated by AJWS and other agencies that are looking forward to go through the findings of our study, which is now over.

Under the women's literacy program, new partners were chosen and work with them started. As a large part of our funding through Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) comes to an end in June 2014, a new proposal for the next phase of Nirantar's work is currently being discussed with them. The negotiations with SDTT have been on since December 2013. Vivek Bhandari, an external consultant and an expert in rural management, conducted an external evaluation of the organisation, including our work in SSK and KL, in March 2014. Mr Bhandari visited both the field programmes, interacted with members of Nirantar, partner organisations, and the founder members and went through reports and documents sent to him. The evaluation report was positive; it highlighted the areas in which the organisation has evolved and established itself over the last ten years. The report made a good argument for the expansion of Nirantar's work in the next phase. Rozmin Ajani, a senior Chartered Accountant, conducted an external audit of Nirantar's grant through SDTT and its financial systems in March. The audit was rigorous and intense and her recommendations highlighted some gaps in our accounting systems. We have taken on board the recommendations of the audit. After the evaluation of the programme, financial systems and meetings with the SDTT leadership, we are preparing for the final round of meetings and submissions in May 2014. The process has been extremely demanding and we are hoping that it will yield positive results.

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Other than this, the team identified and contacted a person for work on MIS. A course was conducted on young people, sexuality and rights, while work on MIS has also taken off. Work on a film on transgender and education is also on-going. The footage for the film has been collected and is now in the process of collating and editing. Along with Khabar Lahariya, the women's literacy team wrote an article for Sakshar Bharat on the occasion of Literacy Day. This article was published in the Hindustan Times.

In April we organized our annual review exercise in Pachmarhi. The three-day exercise included a review of projects and team functioning, individual reviews, a reflection on the functioning of work areas and systems and visioning for some areas of work. The review provided a forum for members, both new and old to articulate their concerns and issues. As the year had been extremely busy, this was a good opportunity for us to take stock of our work and also plan for the future. We revisited the strategic plan and fine-tuned it based on the discussions around the interventions in this period of work. This gave us greater clarity vis a vis some areas of work, like mainstream education. The need for external facilitation and more time was felt during the review.

Sahjani Siksha Kendra (SSK) and Khabar Lahariya (KL) have started functioning as independent organisations in this period. Both the organisations have organized their own Board meetings and Nirantar members have participated in a different capacity as Board members or advisors. We've been concerned and involved in looking for funding options for both organisations, as their grants through SDTT will end next month. The separation of SSK and KL is now nearly complete, with both organisations are getting formally registered as independent organisations as of July this year. Nirantar has also been revisiting and discussing the nature and form of the organisation that is currently functioning as a resource group. New forms of partnership, consolidation of work and a geographical expansion to the eastern region, is on the anvil.

Nirantar Resource Centre

Some key activities happened in the past year as part of Nirantar's role as a resource centre:

- › Attack on field workers of Sahjani Shiksha Kendra
- › Inputs on Sexuality to students of an American School (Shruti Arora)
- › Gender input for Ibtada (Rituparna Borah and Tanmay)
- › International Association for the study of Sexuality, culture and Society conference (IASSCS) in Argentina (Rituparna)
- › Attended the 7th IALLA Course (Swarnalata Mahilkar)
- › Meeting on Status of women report in Delhi- July 2013(Shruti Arora)
- › Meeting with Special Police Unit of Women and Child in Delhi (Shruti Arora)
- › An international conference UIL on Literacy and gender in collaboration with NLM, Delhi (18-20 July 2013) - Shalini and Purnima
- › Gender Input – Red Brigade Lucknow
- › Consultation on Sabala program run by Sahyog

Sexuality and Gender Based Violence

Team Members: Rituparna, Tanmay, Shruti, Purnima

Advisory Role: Jaya Sharma

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| Work |
| Gender Based Violence and Sexuality Module |
| Film on Transgender and Education (Bioscope) |
| Sexuality Mapping |
| Production of a report compiling the work on Gender based Violence and Sexuality and a national level |
| Yuva Yaunikta Adhikar Course |
| Partnership with CINI Yuva |
| Monitoring and Evaluation |

CINI Yuva Partnership:

As part of the young people and sexuality work, we are going to have a partnership with Cini. For many years Cini Yuva has been working with sexual and reproductive health. In the past 2-3 years they have also started working with youth. The staff of Cini Yuva had been a part of the sexuality workshop conducted by Nirantar. We conducted a need assessment with their youth groups last year from which it was clear that their understanding is from a very moralistic perspective. All of these were in favor of selecting Cini as a partner.

Yuva Yaunikta Aur Adhikar:

The yuva, yaunikta and adhikar course was organized from the 15th to 21st July, at Global Arts Village, New Delhi. There were 27 participants in the course, with 20 women, 6 men and 1 Hijra. Participants were from 9 different states and mostly members of organisations, 2 participants were students and 2 who work in an individual capacity. For this course, Nirantar

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had invited 8 resource people from outside the organization – Nivedita Menon, Deepa (Sama), Shalini Mahajan, Renu Adlakha, Rahul Roy, Maya Rao, Sheetal, Shuchi Khushwah. We thought it would serve as an opportunity for learning for Nirantar. The idea was to give participants a glimpse of the lived experiences of people along with theory.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

We started using the tools developed for M and E, and created a baseline and endline for the YYA course. Baseline was conducted before the course, as a form sent to participants that they had to fill on basis of which the strategies for the course was devised. Some tools like interviews and feedbacks were taken after sessions and at the end of the course. Out of 27, 5 participants were interviewed in depth.

Gender based violence and sexuality module:

This module is meant to help field level workers and caseworkers that work on sexuality and violence against women/ gender based violence. Through this module, readers will be able to build their understanding on issues of violence. This module was also distributed to the participants of the Yuva Yaunkita aur Hum course that took place in July. Additionally, it was distributed to other partners of the project namely Mahila Samakhya (Bihar), Mahila Samakhya (Andhra Pradesh), Mahila Samakhya (Assam), and Vanangana.

Film on Transgender and Education

Nirantar made a film on transgender and their issues with the education system. Because Nirantar works with education, we thought it was important to understand the ways in which the education system engages with trans people, who do not find themselves in the binary of male and female. The film tells a story for 4 trans people from different parts of the country and has additional inputs from other organisations working on related issues. Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, funded the film. Nirantar completed the production of a film on issues that people who transgress gender norms face in the education system. The film was finalized in December and the launch took place on the 17th January 2014, in Delhi. Around 80 people came for this launch. A panel was put together with Akshay Khanna, a Marxist, queer rights activist who is currently

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working with IDS, Dipta Bhog, educationist and feminist, and Suchi Kushwah, a gender queer person who is part of an LBT group called Qashti. The film was also screened in Kolkata at the Jadavpur University, in collaboration with women's studies department and Swayam, an NGO working on issues of VAW. The panel had feminist activists, academics, a gender queer person and a member of Nirantar. The film was also shown in the VIBGYOR film festival in Thrissur, Bangalore Queer film festival, film screenings as a part of One Billion Rising and the Centre for education, JNU. Recently, the film has been selected for Kashish film festival, Mumbai and Chennai Queer Film festival.

Sexuality Mapping

AJWS commissioned Nirantar to map the issues and conversations related to sexuality in the country. The intent was to look at sexuality from a political perspective and find linkages with gender-based violence and other issues. The mapping has given Nirantar an opportunity to understand the kind of work taking place around sexuality across the country. Our reach was not limited to people working on sexuality and we also reached out to those working on religion, caste, livelihoods, health, gender based violence etc.

National Report on Gender based Violence and Sexuality

Nirantar has worked with four partner organizations on Gender based Violence and Sexuality. A national report highlights some of our findings on the linkages between GBV and sexuality and experiences of our work with four partners. The findings are based on focus group discussions (FGDs) from the workshops and trainings, interviews held with selected participants and a baseline/endline survey conducted at the beginning and end of the programme, to map the situation and the changes thereof, if any.

Gender-based Violence versus Violence against Women

Sexuality from a feminist perspective refers to a political and a positive approach to sexuality. This approach seeks to build an understanding of why sexual norms exist. This understanding is necessary in order to strengthen the ability to resist and challenge norms and to build solidarity among those who do so by establishing that there are others who fall

outside the norms who are posing a challenge to them. In our explorations of sexuality and gender-based violence from a feminist perspective, Nirantar acknowledges that it isn't only women who face violence due to patriarchal institutions. Transgender people also face violence because they break gender norms, thereby challenging patriarchy. If one is to work against violence from a holistic feminist perspective, one has to include all those who are marginalized on the basis of gender and not just those who have been assigned female at birth. Thus, we prefer to use the language of 'gender-based violence' or GBV.

An excerpt from the report

National Consultation on GBV and Sexuality

In order to advocate our learnings from the work on GBV and sexuality, a National Consultation was planned in April 2014 wherein we planned to share our report -'Gender based Violence and Sexuality- Acknowledging the Elephant in the Room'.

The four organizations that partnered us for this work- MS Bihar, MS Assam, MS Andhra and Vanangana also presented about their fears, anxieties and the experiences of the programme on GBV and Sexuality.

Sexuality Education for young people

In 2012, Nirantar did a need assessment with CINI –YUVA. This exercise enabled us to critically understand the lived realities of young people, different stakeholders in their lives and their level of understanding on sexual and reproductive health and rights. It was felt that people, who are working with young people on SRHR need to be equipped with extensive information on all issues related to the body and sexuality, feel comfortable imparting sexuality information and understand diversities as it relates to young people's lives. With this in mind Nirantar started its work with CINI-YUVA under which the staff members working on SRHR were trained and a district was chosen where there will be intensive work with the staff and the young people on issues of gender and sexuality from a positive and political approach.

WOMEN'S LITERACY AND EMPOWERMENT

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| | <i>Basic Literacy Work</i> |
| 1 | MIS consolidation and end line analysis for first round organisations |
| 2 | Selection of organisations for the second round |
| 3 | Orientation workshop |
| 4 | Teacher's training on pedagogy for adult literacy |
| 5 | Work on MIS for basic literacy |
| | <i>Advance Literacy Work</i> |
| 6 | Advance pedagogy training |
| 7 | Work on MIS for advance literacy |
| 8 | Panchayat module |
| 9 | Follow up visits to 3 organisations for help with advance pedagogy training |
| 10 | Follow up visit for MIS of Sahjani Siksha Kendra |
| 11 | Advance MIS training |
| 12 | Math syllabus booklet prepared |
| 13 | Meeting with AMIED, BMKS, MGSS and Pradan |
| | <i>Overall Work</i> |
| 14 | Capacity building of the basic and advance literacy phase partners (<i>Teachers Refresher and MIS training for advance phase partners</i>) |
| 15 | Developing Advance Literacy Materials |
| 16 | Developing Data Management Module (MIS) for advance and basic literacy |

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| 17 | Input to non-partner organizations: Pradan (Purulia, Jharkhand), Samaj Pragati Sahyog (Dewas, MP), Aga Khan Foundation (Bihar) |
| 18 | Literacy documentation work |
| 19 | Support to Sahjani Shiksha Kendra (SSK) |
| 20 | Issue based work on MGNREGA |

Basic Literacy

MIS consolidation and end line analysis for first round organisations:

Consolidating the MIS data was challenging, especially the numerical data, and we had to take help of a resource person for the same. Because of many challenges, the consolidation took a long time. Now that the consolidation is over, the next work is to connect the baseline and endline data and include qualitative data. The report for this has been sent to partner organisations and SDTT.

Changes in MIS

In the phases of basic literacy, in its first phase, MIS systems were put in place and all organisations used it. Based on the learning from and gaps emerging in the first phase, we have made many changes in the MIS. The effort is so that organisations cannot make any alternations in the numbers and format. Such that once organisations input data, there is little scope to change it. We are trying to develop formulae such that the analysis of the data is done by the computer and not manually.

Changes in Baseline and End-line

Some changes have been brought about in the baseline because it was felt that some skills that we are building through our literacy work are not included in the MIS, baseline and endline, while other skills that we are not building have been included –leading to incorrect evaluation of our work. We faced difficulties in collecting all the quantitative data for the first phase. Other gaps also became visible, for example, the lack of an identification

number for each woman during the baseline meant that we could not decipher which woman was who during the endline. Now women are given their own unique identification during the baseline so that we will be able to do a better quantitative analysis of the data.

Selection of organisations for the second phase of literacy work:

Following an introductory meeting with many organisations to explain the activities of the women's literacy program, 7 new organisations were chosen, which are BAIF (Uttar Pradesh), Udyogini (Jharkhand), Sakar (Bareilly), Shashwat Sahbhagi Sikshan Kendra (Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh), Antyoday (Khagriya, Bihar), Navjivan (Kishanganj, Bihar) were selected. We have started capacity building with these organisations.

Orientation Workshop:

This time the annual 7-day literacy training was conducted in 3 days as was requested by SDTT, so that they could get a strong understanding of Women's Literacy and Empowerment before writing their proposals. The second objective was that the head of the organisation as well as their literacy coordinators should be oriented to literacy work. Because of time scarcity, exposure visits were eliminated from the orientation workshop. The main topics of the workshop were:

- › Theoretical issues linked to women's literacy and education
- › Diverse dimensions of women's literacy
- › Strategies and schemes of work for women's literacy
- › Different activities and techniques for women's literacy
- › Building a functional understanding on women's literacy and education for those who are already working on or soon to start working on women's literacy
- › Introducing literacy work and activities for those organisations that are writing a proposal literacy.

Advance Literacy

Developing Advance Literacy Materials

Based on a common reflection with partner organizations in a workshop in February we have decided that in the advance literacy phase two new concepts will be introduced - fractions and weights and measurements. Nirantar has worked on these concepts and demonstrated their use in the teacher's refresher training. Based on the feedback given by master trainers and teachers, we are now finalising the module.

Developing Data Management Module (MIS) for advance and basic literacy

In the process of developing an effective, efficient and comprehensive Data Management Module, a series of internal workshops and meetings have been done. An external consultant has helped us in this process. Our MIS system now has a unique ID for each learner; the assessment of learners is not just based on the pragati akhya but on the performance of the learners in their tests through test papers at the end of each quarter. The consolidation of the learnings is now computerized, not manual. This data management module is enabling organisations to understand the immediate learning levels of the women.

Capacity building of the basic and advance literacy phase partners

Teachers Refresher and MIS training for advance phase partners

In December 2013 we conducted a teacher's refresher and MIS training for the advance phase partners. One of the challenges articulated by the organizations was to bring women in the basic phase (who had good literacy and numeracy skills but had not completed the basic literacy primers) to the advance phase. For this we have suggested that they map their women and do 3 rounds of camps with these women to help them complete or refresh their skills and move into the advance phase.

MIS training for basic literacy partners

In March 2014 we conducted training for basic literacy partners. The participants were coordinators, supervisors and teachers. In this training we

have introduced and oriented the data management module for MIS. We also got feedback and suggestions from participants on the formats.

Input to other organizations

Literacy work with Pradan

In December 2013, we facilitated a workshop for Pradan in Purulia. The aim of this visit was to provide an input on the Consolidation Phase of the Literacy Programme for neo-literate women. As part of the workshop, we asked the participants to present their vision of the new literacy centres; this led to a discussion about the importance of their vision linked to empowerment as well as establishing links between SHGs and women's literacy. We also helped the PRADAN team and made a plan for their consolidation phase.

Primer Orientation to Samaj Pragati Sahayog, Dewas (MP)

One day input on literacy primers was provided to Samaj Pragati Sahyog on 19th March 2014. The objective was to build their perspectives on women's literacy, pedagogy for adult learners and orient them on the use of literacy primers. The organization has now asked Nirantar to conduct a longer training for the staff of their literacy programme.

Teachers training with Aga Khan Foundation, Bihar

Aga Khan Foundation- Bihar approached Nirantar to do Training of Trainers for five of their local NGOs in Kishanganj, Purnea and Patna for their functional literacy project with adolescent girls. The training was conducted between February and March 2014 in Purnea and Kishanganj with 30 project staff of two local NGOs. The objective of the input was to build gender equality in the context of adolescent girls' education, to conduct ToT, develop tools, processes and methodology for conducting ToTs on functional literacy. In these trainings we have addressed issues related to mobilizing and retaining the interest of the girls and multi-level teaching. The participants were introduced to the Health Primer and Numeracy Primers making them acquainted with its transaction

methodology, pedagogy, its rationale and logical progression of competencies and the issues around gender which is an integral part of the primer.

Literacy Documentation work

Nirantar is presently working on a report to showcase its work on women's literacy with 14 organisations in 4 states (Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan) with 4500 women. The objective of this documentation process is to capture the learnings of this phase of work. The report will showcase strategies, experiences, challenges and major learnings of organizations and those who've been associated with the literacy programme- leadership, teachers, facilitators as well as learners themselves. The report will be used by Nirantar to advocate with government agencies, civil society organizations and donors on issues of women's literacy. Niti Saxena, an external consultant is documenting the process and writing the report, which will be ready by June 2014. A three-day documentation workshop for organized at the beginning of his process. The participants of the workshop were teachers, supervisors and project coordinators of the seven advance literacy programme partners – Ibtada, GVSS, Vanangana, Prabala, FACE, Mahila Haat and HWA. This workshop helped us to collect experiences of women learners, teachers and karyakartas, letters written by women and karyakartas and some of the written materials like broadsheets and photos.

Support to Sahjani Shiksha Kendra (SSK)

Literacy related work

In the last six months, 84 literacy centres have functioned across three blocks. Village level camps have been planned for 10 centres, which are either closed or about to close due to various reasons. As a regular feature of the monitoring process, visits were made to ensure regular functioning of

literacy centres, conducting information and discussion sessions along with teachers and supporting them to maintain centre related records.

Strengthening Literacy levels through village level camps and residential camps

From November 2013 to April 66 village level camps for 4 days and 7 days have been organized in three blocks. Through these camps nearly 1500 new adivaasi and Dalit women could get the opportunity to learn. The objective of the camps was to provide MGNREGA information and to link women's literacy skills with filling the 'Maang Patra' and applications for Job Cards.

Block level camps and Shivirs have been done for advance phase learners and for those villages, which are going to enter the advance phase. The opening of advance level literacy centres in 4 villages followed these Shivirs.

Data consolidation of SSK's literacy and issue based work

In January a two day meeting was done in Delhi with the Nirantar literacy team and SSK leadership team. An exercise of assessing the outreach of women through literacy, MGNREGA and RTE related work and achievements against the proposed target for the period of 2010 to 2013 was done. The SSK team has become more confident in presenting different strategies in sync with the data.

Issue Based Work

In the last six months, the Samiti women were very active in monitoring and taking up issues related to MGNREGA, RTE and pension in 60-62 villages of Mehroni and Madawara blocks with the SSK team. Some of the activities are highlighted here:

MGNREGA

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MGNREGA stall in Mehroni – On MGNREGA diwas SSK along with a few Samiti women organized a stall in Mehroni. These stalls help in disseminating information related to MGNREGA and RTE at the block level. As per last month's record, around 40% people were women who accessed the stall for MGNREGA and RTE related information. The idea behind this was to participate in block level forums and build SSK's identity at the block level.

Creating assets for community under MGNREGA- In Satwasa village women from the Dalit community decided to work on *medhbandhi* for storage of water in fields. This was the first time when women collectively created a work to benefit their own fields and also created an asset that can be used by the community for a longer time. The process of *medhbandhi* involved making large blockades to store water, and was considered as something only the men of the village could create. The SSK team along with samiti women prepared the plan for this and around 25-30 women worked under the supervision of Haribai, the mate. This work has not only established Haribai as a "mate" in the village but increased the confidence as a collective where they could take decisions and execute the task collectively.

Organization Development Process

After SSK's registration in July 2013, the process of organization development (OD) was facilitated by two external members, Praneeta Kapur and Deepika Singh from November'13 to January'14 in three phases. Some of the important outcomes of the OD process were:

Identifying areas for SSK's future work and building and strengthening the organization's capacities.

SSK with the help of OD facilitators has identified its future work areas- women's and adolescent girls' literacy and education; violence against women; strengthening of the sangathan through work on MGNREGA and SMCs; working on the implementation of the RTE; issues of Caste/untouchability.

Issues related to establishing SSK as an organization with emphasis on fund raising and meeting legal compliances, training and capacity building to work on new as well as existing areas of work. Based on the identified

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work areas a draft proposal was prepared. The *Rehnuma* (systems and policies) of SSK was finalized at the end of this process. The facilitators also suggested for building a greater understanding of Nirantar and SSK's relationship and ways of working for future.

Board Meeting

The second board meeting of SSK took place in the Nirantar office in Delhi on 19th April. The agenda was to take some financial decisions, to share the outcomes of OD process and discussion on the relationship between SSK, Nirantar and the Board. Keeping this in mind one board member from Nirantar, Renuka ji attended the meeting. Praneeta presented the outcomes and concerns from the OD process. As it was a presentation of SSK's OD report, discussions and concerns were presented largely from SSK's point of view. The main decisions of the board meeting were:

Board members and Nirantar should take responsibility to assist SSK for fund raising, writing proposals, and proceeding with legal and financial procedures.

SSK should raise funds from other sources as well e.g. Individual and organizational contribution, through website, donations etc.

Considering the present status of work and funding situation, how will Nirantar support SSK (to be discussed in Nirantar's Board meeting)

Legal and financial procedures of SSK

SSK has opened a bank account in Mehroni, the organization has got its PAN card and has applied for 12 A with the support of Board members.

MAINSTREAM EDUCATION and YOUNG PEOPLE

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| Gender Resource Manual |
| IPE Global TOT |
| Kalam-e-Niswan |
| Pitara Booklet: Yuva Pitara Series |
| Pitara Booklet: Yuva Pitara Series Distribution |

Training Of Trainers for NRHM Officials: We were contacted by an organization names IPE Global who works on the National Rural Health Mission in Bihar, to train officials on gender and social equality. This process started in August 2013 and will continue for a year. Throughout this process, SAMA (an organization that works on health from a feminist perspective), will be working with us. For this project, making a training module and training the trainers is the key activity. For this, it was for important for Nirantar to conduct a needs assessment, which was done for 2 days in Patna. The module will be based on this.

Pitara Booklet: Yuva Pitara Series

The 12 book series of Yuva Pitara is now complete. This work was done from a grant from the Ministry of Human Resource Development. These books were being produced as part of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. It was agreed in a meeting with the MHRD that they would invite us for their national meeting of state departments where Nirantar would make a presentation about the series.

NCPCR: Social Audit and Tools

The work of conducting social audits in schools of Lalitpur, which is mandatory according to NCPCR, is now complete. NCPCR has started the process of establishing social audits at the state level in a collective manner. As part of this, the first step is to standardize the broad framework of the social audit. A meeting was called to do so, in which Nirantar was also a part.

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School Audits with CPR: CPR is documenting social audit processes taking place in different states. In this activity, they contacted organisations working on social audits through NCPCR. Kiran Bhatti in her personal capacity called a meeting of organisations and spoke about the project and the tools and methodology used.

Kalam-e-Niswan (Muslim Women's Education): The writing and printing of the Kalam-e-Niswan book is now complete. As hoped, the book is very lively and rich in its content, but the language is a bit difficult because there is a need to refer to footnotes to understand the meaning of many words. The publicity of this book has been done through various mailing lists and social media platforms.

Gender Resource Manual: The work on the gender resource manual has started to catch pace. A basic outline for the manual has been decided and Dipta Priya will be working on parts of the manual. A broad structure was created for the manual by working with Dipti.

India Exclusion Report: This report is an initiative of Center for Equity Studies. They look at different social organisations, programs and strategies through the lens of exclusion. This is an annual report that picks up different issues each year. This year the main issue is education. Many groups, collectives and individuals who have experience in their own work areas will contribute to the report. The structure of this report has been decided and a core group is giving its feedback on this structure.

Young Muslim Women's Leadership Building

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|--------------------------------------|
| Photography Workshop |
| Perspective Building on Gender |
| Videography and Photography Workshop |
| Film Work |
| Computer training |
| Monitoring and Evaluation |

National Exclusion Report

In 2013 Center for Equity Studies began the process of compiling a report on issues of exclusion, marginalization and social development. CES intends on bringing out one such Report every year. The theme of this year's Exclusion Report was Education. Nirantar was approached by CES to contribute on issues regarding girl's exclusion from education. Nirantar's chapter focused on the need for gender trainings for teachers as well as inputs from a gender perspective with respect to curriculum and pedagogy, both while creating and transacting this material. The chapter proceeds to discuss the need for better infrastructure catering to special needs for girls – better health facilities and separate toilets for girls in the school premises. Students are forced to opt out of school due to caste based humiliation and discrimination – both inside and outside classroom. Nirantar advocated for social and gender equity to be part of teachers training programs as well.

Nirantar's input for CEDAW Alternate Report 2014

This year Nirantar contributed a chapter on gender and education to the CEDAW report. The article was divided into the following subsections - Early Child Care and Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Adolescent girls' education and Women's literacy and Education. Two new subsections were added as Nirantar felt some crucial issues had not being looked at in the previous framework, using this opportunity to address issues of *Sexual Harassment and Educational Institutions* and *Impact of Conflict and Communal Violence on Education*. Nirantar attended a strategizing meeting held in Delhi on 13 May 2014 to finalize the report. In this meeting different groups who had contributed chapters met to give feedback on each other's chapters. The final product is going to be presented in front of CEDAW in Geneva in June- July 2014. This is an important advocacy document for Nirantar as it has international relevance and has given us a platform to present our perspective and recommendations for a global audience.

Consultation on “Status of the Girl Child”

In February 2014, Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai held a consultation on a study they conducted called the ‘Status of the Girl Child in India’. Nirantar used this forum to draw linkages between gender and education – the need to strengthen retention rates and reduce drop outs, to the issue of higher number of girls being present in government schools which provide low standards of education and increasing privatization in education. Nirantar also briefly presented the findings of the Textbook Study, the RMSA Heteronormativity Audit and also spoke about teacher trainings and the need for inclusion of gender more holistically in curriculum and pedagogy.

Research Project on Landscape Analysis of Early

Marriage in India

In September 2013, Nirantar and Sadbhavana Trust partnered to bid for a research opportunity provided by American Jewish World Society for “A Landscape Analysis of Child Marriage in India”. Nirantar and Sadbhavana Trust were among other organizations that presented a proposal and won this bid. The team started working on this project from October 2013.

The research provided a landscape analysis of the issue of early marriage in India, mapping the root causes, impacts and interventions on the issue. In highlighting the gaps in existing interventions based on this understanding, the mapping opens up avenues for future engagement with research, interventions and capacity building in order to strategize a way forward. With the growing interest of the development industry in the issue of early marriage, the current study is among the few that analyses the issue from a feminist perspective, with a strong focus on gender, sexuality and empowerment.

The study was a combination of primary and secondary data collection. To collect secondary data different types of literature were reviewed - policy documents, academic literature, NGO reports, Funder Reports etc. To

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collect primary data 3 exercises were carried out. First, Key Informant Persons (KIP) from various fields, who have looked at the issue of Child Marriage, were interviewed. A number of organizations were suggested by the KIPs, and this led to the second exercise – field visits. A questionnaire was developed and used in the field while carrying out interviews. Field visits were carried out in seven states, and a total of 19 organisations visited. Lastly, Nirantar held a National Consultation on Early Marriage in New Delhi, in early December. This was a space for organisations to talk about their challenges and issues that they felt might need more work on when dealing with interventions around child/early and forced marriage.

The root cause stated by KIPs, in literature and in visits revolved around the economic distress of parents in rural and semi-rural areas. Additionally, women in the marital home are seen as economic assets and there is a need to exchange this form of labour sooner rather than later. This is also linked to the fear of sexual violence of young unmarried girls and follows the argument of purity, virginity and chastity of girls. The sexuality of young people is an obvious threat to the cultural mores of a community and marriage is the quickest solution to keeping those mores intact. The lack of structural institutions and alternative spaces do not exist for girls (in education or livelihood) and marriage is thus seen at the central and ultimate destination for them.

The impact of marrying early affects both girls as well as boys. Education takes a back seat once the girl is sent to her marital home, while boys are pushed out of school and into unskilled labour in order to provide for the family. As a couple they need to prove their fertility and virility, affecting the health of young girls and their infants. Early pregnancy leads to other issues of maternal and child health, however these are exaggerated by the nutritional priorities within the family, where the needs of the young married bride in the marital family feature last.

The trauma of marriage at a young age also leads to mental health issues, which eventually affects the physical health of young girls. Sexuality and bodily integrity are critically linked to this, as young girls grapple with

understanding and articulating their own needs including the right to say yes, or no, to sex or negotiating for contraception usage.

A primary gap that cuts across the board of interventions is the fact that there is no critical engagement with the institution of marriage itself. Because most interventions take marriage as a given in the lives of young people, their interventions are limited to pushing age at marriage to match a legal age.

The discourse also revolves around Child Rights and marriage is not seen as an issue that young people/adolescents deal with. Thus the interventions lack young people's perspective and creative ways of looking at interventions against early marriage.

Similarly, neither is Right to Choice nor is masculinity being addressed; as most interventions revolve around the girl child and adolescent girls.

The interventions and discourse are narrowly focused on law and cash incentive schemes – even here there are insufficient human resources (multiple responsibilities) and no capacity building (unlike juvenile justice system). Furthermore, there is an absence of state provided services for young married girls in the area of health, education and livelihood.

KHABAR LAHARIYA

Group members: Shalini, Disha, Poorvi, Bini and Sandhya

Advisor: Dipta

On 11th July 2013 Khabr Lahariya group was registered as a separate trust. In the past 6 month, KL has received a lot of media coverage at a state and national level. KL has also initiated itself into the space of online news media. There was a special segment on monsoons and on international literacy day there was a feature article written by two districts – Chitrakoot and Lalitpur.

The Women's Media and News Trust

On 11th July 2013, KL project officially became a separate project in “The Women’s Media and News Trust”, which is registered as a public charitable trust. Shalini coordinated this process as the “centralor” and the founding members of the trust and its trustees include Kavita, Meera and Disha.

The trust as applied for its 12A and 80G certifications. Till then we will be getting Indian donations for the corpus fund for the trust. We haven’t received any funds for the growth of KL. We added two centres, Lucknow and Faizabad without any grants, based on money received through awards. Post registration, we have found that foreign funds are not allowed to run a newspaper, neither through grants nor individual donations which we wanted to raise through an online crowdsourcing campaign.

Understanding Community Media:

We tried to understand the context of organisations working in the grassroots on community media so that we can build on this in the future if we explore the possibilities of engaging with other forms of community media. In this process we engaged with many organisations, PACS, Breakthrough, Gramvani. They were very interested in sharing their strategies with us, but we soon realized that they are all FCRA registered organisations and none of them are RNI registered news agencies. From

that we realize that our strategies for community media will need to be different.

Khabar Lahariya Online:

In February 2012, we launched the Khabar Lahariya news website. There is a weekly system of uploading news onto the website. In May and June, advanced technological inputs were given to all the journalists on the field from different districts. These trainings included inputs on page design software – Indesign.

Point Of View, Mumbai conducted trainings with us on running the website and related outreach issues. After the workshop, the responsibility of converting news content into an online format and of uploading it is with district level offices. The Delhi staff does the final supervision. In the past few months, a lot of traffic was diverted to the KL website, facebook page and twitter account. Online news agencies such as The Alternative, Huffington Post, TruthOut, Daily Kos, World Pulse, Women's International Perspective have followed and retweeted our inputs which has substantially increased our outreach.

Media coverage and recognition:

In May, Government of Uttar Pradesh and Kaifi Azmi Academy awarded KL with an award for “Innovative and meaningful utility” of the newspaper. The award was received at the hands of Shabana Azmi and Javed Akhtar along with a prize amount of Rs 51,000.

On Journalism day, KL was felicitated in Mahoba. When during the event there were questions on women’s safety and lifestyle, Kavita responded raising questions not only on this mindset but also on the overall responsibility of journalists and the state in this matter.

Online, KL has been recognized as well. Publications such as Washington Times, First City Magazine, Femina, India Water Portal, Tehelka and Outlook have written about it.

Study on the Experiences of Women Reporting from Small towns

As preliminary research for the initiation of a network of rural women journalists - a need we have felt over 12 years of working on establishing women as journalists in remote rural areas – the Khabar Lahariya team

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travelled to 4 states of north India between August and December 2013 to map the prevalence and status of women in media in rural areas. We did focus group discussions in the state capitals, and then in-depth interviews with 5 women reporters (across media forms) working at the district level or below. The study was an intense learning experience for the KL team, in this phase of expansion, and a validation of what we have been able to achieve, in a profession where so few women survive. The report of the study was launched in February 2014, and is available online at <http://khabarlahariya.in/page.php?pid=81#.U2xNSK2SxIs>.

Launch of the Network of Rural Women Journalists

Drawing on our own experiences, and that of the many women journalists we met across north India, a need was felt to initiate a network of these women, for support and sharing of news and resources, and as a collective voice for advocacy of issues of women in media outside the mainstream. The network was launched as part of an event in February 2014, where women reporters shared their journeys and experiences and discussed ways of being in touch and collaborating in the future.

Accolades and Visibility for KL

In the past 6 months, KL has been awarded recognition by two very different kinds of agencies: one from the Marico Innovation Foundation, as one of ' "India's Best Innovations" on the basis of uniqueness, impact and sustainability', and one from the Deutsche Welle (Germany's official broadcasting agency) initiated Global Media Forum, for our website. Our challenge has been to convert the recognition and discussion around KL into channels for its sustainability. However, these two awards, from well-known corporate and digital media agencies, we hope will result in support and collaborations with these in the near future. In this period we have also completed and launched a new website on KL (www.khabarlahariya.in), the culmination of a 2 year process, including launching the online edition, which we hope will help with spreading the word about KL. KL was invited to TEDx to share the experience of a rural, innovative media intervention. The event was organized by XLRI, Jamshedpur in March and was well received.

Sustainability of KL

Considerable time and effort over the last 6 months has gone into fundraising attempts for KL. Our two major grants – from UNDEF and SDTT – end in February and June 2014 respectively, and there is pressure to generate both an interim amount to run 6 editions and Delhi costs until a longer-term grant comes through. We have only one grant as the Women, Media and News Trust, in the form of a consultancy with Save the Children, to report on infant and maternal health in UP. This will cover part-costs of 3 editions until December. Numerous grant proposals and award applications have been put in. At present, we are consulting with a Bangalore-based agency called Innovation Alchemy to help us create a fundraising framework and a roadmap. We are also working on a plan to raise around 40 lakhs in the next 6 months, through corporate agencies, crowdfunding and fellowships.

Strengthening grassroots reporting

Despite work on the study of journalists, and the pressure of fundraising, a lot of time has been spent in planning and in the field on strengthening issue-based reporting in the older and new editions of KL. We recognise that rigorous grassroots reporting is KL's USP, and one way of sustaining ourselves in the future is establishing the quality and validity of our news, with partnerships with mainstream media to increase our outreach. Over the past 6 months, we have done special reporting on the conditions in relief camps in Muzaffarnagar (<http://khabarlahariya.org/?cat=75>), health, specifically child survival issues (<http://khabarlahariya.org/?cat=84>), technology in rural areas (<http://khabarlahariya.org/?cat=78>) – in addition to other supplements on travel, and women in media! Since March 2014, KL has been doing regular reporting on the expectations of and hopes from the elections this year: young reporters have engaged with the democratic process for the first time, interviewed both local and national candidates (<http://khabarlahariya.org/?cat=83>). Reports from KL have been translated and carried on online portals, such as The Alternative (<http://thealternative.in/?s=khabar+lahariya>) and Open Election India (<https://plus.google.com/communities/116616396642157763127>).

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Highlights

- › First award – The Bobs - for KL's online edition from the Global Media Forum
- › An award for best social innovation from the Marico Innovation Foundation
- › Well received special reporting on the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections
- › KL presentation at TEDx
- › The launch of a report on a study of women reporters in small towns, and the first network of rural women journalists
- › The WoMeN Trust receives its first grant from Save the Children Foundation
- › Planning for fundraising in next phase, in consultation with advisors and other agencies