

# GRASSROOTS INDIA TRUST

annual report . 2004-2005

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# Trainings and CAPACITY BUILDING

Grassroots India in association of its offshoot Grassroots Institute organized several trainings of the tribal girls/youths as also provided capacity building support to the field personnel of several NGOs in Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh.

## ▶▶ Trainings on Media Writing Skills

During the year 2004-05 the Grassroots India and Grassroots Institute conducted two rounds of *training* on Media Writing Skills for 25 tribal girls and few youths. This training took place in two rounds: first in December 2004 and second in February 2005. A grassroots organization namely Adivasi Samata Manch hosted the training program.

In 8-days training the participants learnt how to write, edit and submit the news items, news stories, articles, letter to editor, feature, etc. in local and distant newspapers/magazines published in Hindi. Participants were previously almost ignorant about the media writings although they were educated up to maximum graduate standard, however, most of them were higher secondary or senior secondary. Belonging to remotest villages of North Bastar Kanker district in Chhattisgarh some of the women participants even never read newspaper. After rigorous exercises and field work in adjacent villages the girls wrote bulky stuff about the problems and issues of mining and land alienation, lack of drinking facilities and sanitation, merciful conditions of tribal schools, unaccountable panchayat system, famous *maalik maqbooza* case of Bastar, sick health delivery system, the culture of local *haat* bazaars and wisdom of older persons. As a resource person Hasrat Arjjumend saw considerable change in the tribal girls. Adivasi Samata Manch later streamlined the skills of girls for developing a women's vernacular magazine.

## ▶▶ On-Field Capacity Building

On-field capacity building remained one of the core area of activities of Grassroots India during the year 2004-05. The organization supported through this mode of development intervention a lot many grassroots organizations namely:

- ▶ CREDA, Mirzapur (Uttar Pradesh)
- ▶ SIDA, Panna (Madhya Pradesh)
- ▶ SGVS, Sarguja (Chhattisgarh)
- ▶ Lokshakti, Rajnandgaon (Chhattisgarh)
- ▶ SGSA, Sarguja (Chhattisgarh)
- ▶ Saathi, Bastar (Chhattisgarh)
- ▶ VCA, South Bastar (Chhattisgarh)

Grassroots India 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 Grassroots India included:

- community outreach,
- designing IEC campaigns,
- understanding people's needs,
- strategizing the future course of action,
- scaling the progress,
- finding gaps,
- planning the pathways of change,
- researching and analyzing.

Viewing the capacities enhancement of NGOs the adjacent organizations has been approaching to associate who would be considered in next year.

# Research and DOCUMENTATION

For Grassroots India and Grassroots Institute the research has been the main activity. In this financial year one book was compiled by Grassroots India based on previous work of the Director on primary education in Jharkhand. Rest two studies were undertaken by Grassroots Institute.

## ▶▶ Primary Education at Crossroads in Jharkhand

Study had been conceptualized to understand the ground realities as against the popular rhetoric posed by the education authorities at the district level in Dumka district of Jharkhand. This study actually was conducted by the Director in 2003, which resulted into a report of 200 pages with meaningful findings. The findings arisen from the study are applicable in other states of India too. Viewing the relevance of the study in wider context, the Grassroots India decided to recompile it into the form of a book. Based on empirical research the book contains the following chapterization:

- ▶ Introduction: Still a long way to go
- ▶ Revisiting the educational past
- ▶ Akil Batti beating the drums
- ▶ Disadvantaged half
- ▶ Too few to teach
- ▶ Overloaded teachers loosing the ground
- ▶ No more shouldering the nation
- ▶ Barriers of barrier
- ▶ Resistance to participation
- ▶ How long to afford bankruptcy
- ▶ Conclusion

Before publishing of the book SAHARA TIME published on 11 December 2004 a popular article 'When the Inspector comes calling'. The book is in print with Concept Publishing, New Delhi.

## ▶▶ Study: Socio-Ecology of Groundwater Irrigation

The Chhattisgarh has sufficient water resources and a large untapped potential. 4.3 million ha area can be irrigated as against the existing irrigation potential of 1.34 million ha. With the support of International Water Management Institute, the Grassroots Institute conducted this study in May-June 2004 in 7 villages. The study came out with following recommendations of further research on:

- (a) Estimation of future demand of water for users in agriculture, (b) Identification of priorities for development of groundwater, (c) Groundwater regulation policy: Stakeholders analysis, (d) Identification of feasible and potential runoff conservation and groundwater augmentation schemes, (e) Study on to optimize the cropping pattern with respect to precipitation, (f) Area specific groundwater development study to optimize number of mechanized groundwater irrigation structures, (g) Studying the groundwater movement (discharge direction and fluctuation).

## ▶▶ Study: Indigenous Technologies of Post-Harvest Storage

In 2004 the Grassroots India conducted a research cum documentation of tribal communities' indigenous technologies of post-harvest storage of cereal crops and vegetables. Among these techniques the seed preservation was one critical method. From the work, LEISA INDIA journal published an article in its September 2004 issue.

# Participatory action for DEVELOPMENT & CHANGE

Participatory action is the important objective of Grassroots India that has undertaken several activities by participating and supporting the awareness and action programs. Some activities were undertaken in partnership of grassroots NGOs.

## ▶▶ Awareness on Water Conservation

In partnership of a grassroots organization, Sarguja Gramin Vikas Sansthan, based in Sarguja the community of over 22 villages was oriented towards the importance of water harvesting and conservation where it falls. Among the tools of making people aware the most important was Film Shows. Several films casting efforts of water conservation of various communities in the country were screened in the villages in front of gatherings. Each film show was followed by discussion on the relevant topics. The rural people exhibited immense interests in conserving water and maintaining harvesting structures on the pattern of traditional practices. Moreover, people raised issues of local governance and its accountability.

Awareness activities actually led to a mega Jal Sammelan held in December 2004.

## ▶▶ Jal Sansad Rally and Sammelan

About 2000 women and men gathered in Ramnagar village of Wadrafnagar block (Sarguja) on 5 December 2004 to show their solidarity in conserving the rainwater, fighting against drought and hunger, acting towards food secure villages, transparent local governance and accountable local administration. In the leadership of local people the Sammelan was facilitated by SGVS, local NGO specializing in watershed management.

In Sammelan the people decided to prepare their village micro plans for acting further on the agenda.

## ▶▶ Gandhi March & Human Rights Day

On 2 October 2004 the Grassroots India organized a Gandhi March in Bhopal when the organization also held meeting of Board of Trustees. With the objective of calling peace in the country children of 2 schools participated that staged its public meeting in Misrod on Bhopal-Hoshangabad highway. Similarly, on 10 December 2004, World Human Rights Day was celebrated in Delhi with self commitment of working towards protecting the human rights.

## ▶▶ Agro-Biodiversity Meet

In the month of February 2004, over 40 women and men met in Sai Ropa village in Banjar block of Kullu district to discuss at stretch the importance of agro-biodiversity, their indigenous practices to maintain it, erosion of gene pool due to invasion of modern agriculture, threat of loss of biodiversity and ways of preserving the genetic diversity and restoring food security. The villagers belonging to Tirthan valley of Great Himalayan National Park participated this meet for saving the future of their generations and the world community. Meet was jointly organized by SHARA, local NGO, and Grassroots India.

Meet concluded with the strategy to act on the following vital areas of action: (1) Preparation of 'community agrobiodiversity registers' and formation of 'community seed banks'; (2) Establishment of 'biodiverse farm' as demonstration site, and linking the 'biodiverse organic foods' with ecotourism activities; and (3) Extension of 'agrobiodiversity preservation & cultivation on-farm'.

# Networking and **SOLIDARITY**

For the purpose of advocacy and forwarding the issues of human welfare networking with NGOs and other organizations is inevitable as also the solidarity. Grassroots India put forward the solidarity to many organizations that held several programs too.

## ▶▶ Sub-Regional Workshop on Nutrition, Food Safety and Biotechnology

On 5-7 October 2004 the VOICE and Gene Campaign with Consumers International organized a Sub-Regional (SAARC Countries) workshop at Jamia Hamdard in New Delhi to discuss the food security issues in modern context when biotechnology industry is increasingly taking over the food production sector. Issues of bio-safety under CODEX were also discussed. Grassroots India participated in the workshop and showed its solidarity with the campaigners.

## ▶▶ National Convention on People's Right to Information

In order pressurize the UPA government on to go with CMP in which Right to Information had been recognized as basic human right and its formation of Act in parliament, the National Coalition on People's Right to Information (NCPRI) organized the national convention in Delhi University on 11-13 October 2004. In 3 days events the Grassroots India participated and showed solidarity.

## ▶▶ National Dalit Rally

On World Human Rights Day, a vast rally was organized in Ramlila Maidan of Delhi on 10 December 2004. The organizers campaigned for protection of dalit and adivasi rights on this day celebration in which Grassroots India showed its solidarity.

## ▶▶ Networking with Grassroots NGOs

Grassroots India actively networked with 99 grassroots NGOs in Chhattisgarh, over 50 organizations in Madhya Pradesh, about 35 NGOs in Uttar Pradesh and over a dozen organizations in Himachal Pradesh.

In networking the Grassroots India not only shared the knowledge on issues but also provided them plenty of vital information electronically. This information was in the following forms:

- soft copies of books
- mailing addresses of advocacy resources
- important press clippings
- announcements of trainings, workshops
- copies of Bills/policy documents

NGOs have benefited lot from such efforts.

# Team at work the BACKBONE

*Director*

**Hasrat Arjjumend**

*Counselor*

**S. Haleem**

*State & Networking Coordinator*

**Sanajy K. Gupta**

*Training Coordinator*

**S. Vanjari**

*Media Coordinator*

**Ashendra Singh**

*Research Coordinator*

**Dr. Rashmi Saxena**

*Consultant*

**Patricia Morris, Canada**

## **Board of Trustees at Grassroots India**

**Prof. Kamal Dixit** retired as Head of Deptt. of Journalism, M.C. National University of Journalism, Bhopal.

**Dr. P. K. Ghosh** heads the Deptt. of Social Work, Vishva-Bharati, Shanti Niketan, West Bengal. He specializes in Social Change, Rural Sociology, and Peasant Movements.

**Dr. Aslam Ansari** is Associate Professor of Strategic Communications at Deptt. of Agricultural Communication, G.B. Pant University of Agri. & Tech., Pantnagar, Uttaranchal.

**Hasrat Arjjumend** is development activist and researcher specializes in range of themes of development studies, management and communication. He is **managing trustee** of the organization.

**Onkar Singh** specializes in rural management, governance and peace & conflict studies. He is International Fellow of Ford Foundation.

**Ashendra Singh** is development journalist and radio communicator.

**Ms. Sabiha Haleem** is a social worker and is engaged in coordination of organizational activities.