



**Impact Assessment Study of
Integrated Women and Child Development
Programme Implemented by WAFD in
Bharatpur, Rajasthan**



**Impact Assessment Study of Integrated Women and Child Development Programme
Implemented by WAFD in Bharatpur, Rajasthan**

Study Commissioned by:

WOMEN ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT

3rd Floor, St. Soldier Tower

Near PVR, Vikas Puri

New Delhi – 110 018

Tel: 011-28540344 Fax: 011-28546446

E-mail: zareenwafd@w3c.com, wafd078@yahoo.co.in

Supported by:

GERMAN AGRO ACTION

Authored by:

Hasrat Arjjumend

Director

GRASSROOTS INSTITUTE

c/o Grassroots India Trust

1st Floor, 134, Street 17, Zakir Nagar, Okhla,

Opp. New Friends Colony A-Block, New Delhi – 110 025

Tel: 011-26935452, 9868466401 Fax: +91-11-26936366

E-mail: grassrootsinstitute@gmail.org Website: www.grassrootsglobal.net/gi

November 2006, New Delhi

This study represents the situations in sampled villages where IWCD programme was implemented during 2001-2006 by WAFD. This IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY is more a qualitative discourse than a quantitative. The observations made in June-July 2006 and September 2006 and opinions put forward are solely of the researcher cum author. Observations and opinion of others may differ from that of given in this document.

Contents

■ INTRODUCTION	..... 5
■ FRAMEWORK OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION	..... 9
■ IMPLICATION OF CENTRES ESTABLISHMENT	..... 11
■ IMPACT ON CHILD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT	..... 13
■ SOCIAL IMPACTS OF IWCD PROGRAMME	..... 17
■ NUTRITION PROGRAMME IN BALWADIS	..... 21
■ COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP	..... 23
■ ECONOMIC PROGRAMME AND SUSTAINABILITY	..... 27
■ INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND PARTICIPATION	..... 31
■ CAPACITY BUILDING	..... 35
■ CONCLUSION	..... 37
■ ANNEX-I: SOME CASE STORIES	..... 41

3



Preface

RAJASTHAN is known for kings and hence is a feudal society. Rural societies really reflect peculiar dynamics, power relations, poverty status, aspirations and needs, and quests for development. In such peculiar society, the development interventions usually encounter immense resistance of communities if the power relations are particularly tried to be altered. Those who are the elites in the villages respond to the development interventions in varied ways. If, deliberately or inadvertently, their authority is in some way challenged, they sometimes react and lobby against the project. Sometimes they take extra interests and claim control over the project interventions and resources, and thus filter down the benefits in accordance of their set calculations. Sidelining such elites many a times is disastrous. So for a development project it is always challenging to strike a balance while dealing with rural elites. Despite the rhetoric of focusing the poor, marginalized and weaker sections of rural society, many interventions fail in focusing adequately those for whom they are meant.

WAFD has operated the Integrated Women and Child Development (IWCD) programme in difficult situations of Rajasthan's feudal society. It is really an eye-opening that IWCD programme succeeded in remarkably changing the gender relations in feudalistic environment where girls are not encouraged to study, to go out of home and to work, and the women are not allowed to speak in front of men, or even to assemble together for some good cause.

The IWCD programme addressed chiefly the girl child education and women empowerment. Poor and marginalized communities were in centre. The impact assessment study has explored the qualitative changes that have taken place in the target villages since 1998. The study considered critically several qualitative attributes of the programme and its outcomes e.g. institutionalization and participation, capacity building, impact on child education and development, social impacts, women empowerment and leadership, and economic sustainability. This report consists of 11 chapters. Facts and analysis in this report reflects the situations of the programme at the time of field visits. Suggestions to improve the report are welcome.



1. Introduction

RAJASTHAN has always been a state of feudal lords, where society still appears ridden of feudalistic structure. Although the centres of feudal powers have replaced into modern state structures, the rural society has remained with pseudo-feuds who resist the change or reform to happen in the villages. Bharatpur district is admixture of feudalistic social orders of Rajasthan and western Uttar Pradesh. On the backdrop of hierarchical feudal social order the gender inequity and oppression/ suppression of dalits and weak are primary social occurrences.

In such a challenging environment, WAFD operationalized different development interventions. WAFD started work in 1998 in 10 villages of 3 blocks of Bharatpur district. Ever since, the interventions expanded to over 75 villages of 5 blocks of Bharatpur. Currently, WAFD principally executes three projects:

5

1. *Integrated Women and Child Development Programme (IWCD)* [in partnership with German Agro Action]. This project is being executed in 10 villages of Bharatpur district: Ghazipur, Aronda, Aitmadpur and Allapuri of Bayana block; Jeevanwas, Chulhera and Bihadi of Deeg block; and, Bakoli, Ghata and Bhidyani of Roopwas block.
2. *Eco-Village Development Project (EVD)* [in partnership with JYY Finland and INSEDA]. This project is operational in 10 villages of Sewar block namely Nagla Bhagat, Darapur Kalan, Nau Ka Nagla, Nagla Sikham, Chakradharpur, Chaubey Ka Nagla, Nagla Banjara, Nagla Tiketa, Chhanpirawa, Darapur Khurd and Naswaria, and 2 villages of Roopwas block namely Bakoli and Bhidyani.
3. *Microfinance for Rural Livelihoods* [in partnership with Grameen Bank of Bangladesh]. This project is being implemented in 22 villages of Weir block.

Purpose and Goal of the IWCD Project: The project is to improve the education and awareness situation especially with respect to the girls in the village, and to create women's groups which can take decisions.

Purpose of EVD Project: Project is to develop and establish ecologically sustainable micro-ecosystem taking the village and its geographical boundary as a small unit for development initiative that preserves natural resources.

Goal of Microfinance Project: Primary goal of the project is poverty alleviation; and, improving the status of women in family and so inculcating decision making power among them.

By December 2006 the partnership with German Agro Action will get over and WAFD has decided to hand over the IWCD programme to mahila mandals (women groups) in all 10 villages. In a decade period the WAFD has prepared the women to continue the activities even when WAFD would withdraw from the villages in December. The “centre” is critical in this project that was established in each village through which education was imparted to pre-school children and the girls got non-formal education. For each ‘centre’ a local woman has been trained to undertake education and awareness activities. But the women and parents in each of the villages have been educated not only to facilitate and supervise the ‘centres’ but also to monitor the progress of children education and nutrition being given to pre-school children. With the intention of enabling the village women to sustain the programme after withdrawal of WAFD, the mahila mandals are assisted in doing income generation activities.

Viewing the completion of IWCD programme shortly and the challenge of its sustainability, WAFD planned to commission an “impact assessment study” that can not only evaluate the substantial impacts the programme has made but also analyze the processes involved in executing interventions.

To undertake this independent and qualitative study the Grassroots Institute (of Grassroots India Trust) was given task. WAFD expected to examine the following impacts of the project:

1. Have the works/interventions brought about the desired and planned impact on the lives of women and girls? In terms of:
 - 95 percent of the girls taking admission in formal schools from the balwadies are successfully completing primary school education and at least 50 percent of them are going to middle school;
 - mahila mandals are prepared and motivated to be able to continue the programme after handing over in December 2006;
 - women of the mahila mandals are strong and empowered to take steps to strengthen their daughters;
 - women are aware of basic health issues, get their children immunized, practice the 5 cleans for safe delivery, and know importance of proper nutrition for mother and child; and
 - status of women has improved within the family and they have improved their decision-making power.
2. Has the programme a replicability being given the identical situations?
3. Has the programme been able to reach the poorest of poor women in target villages?

4. What is the impact of programme on poverty? What is the result of income generation activities in terms of poverty alleviation? Have the nutrition and health situations improved?
5. What is the impact of programme on gender issues?
6. Will the project sustain once WAFD withdraws? What is the scenario of sustainability?

The task had been taken up to investigate the qualitative aspects of the programme implemented particularly between 2002 and 2006. Till 2002 the project was actually in pilot phase.

1.1 Research Methodology

The ‘impact assessment study’ was conceptualized in the month of May 2006 after having several discussions with WAFD. Based on the project design of IWCD programme, a protocol of research was formulated in June 2006 integrating the most important aspects and parameters for study.

Sampling

7

Initially, the sampling was proposed to be 20 percent of the target villages. But in actual it became 70 percent when fieldwork was undertaken in 7 villages out of 10. Intensive studies were undertaken in these 7 villages; yet 3 other villages were also visited. The villages that were studied include:

Villages of Bayana Block	Aitmadpur	Intensive
	Aronda	Intensive
	Ghazipur	Intensive
	Aronda	Visitation only



Villages of Roopwas Block	Bakoli Ghata Bhidyani	Intensive Intensive Visitation only
Villages of Deeg Block	Chulhera Bihadi Jeevanwas	Intensive Intensive Visitation only

Research Tools

Research from the beginning had been conceived ‘participatory research’. Villagers participated in the study fully as also other stakeholders like programme implementing staff, centre workers, community leaders, mahila mandal representatives and panchayat representatives. Tools mainly applied were:

- semi-structured interview,
- focused group discussions,
- informal meetings,
- transact walks,
- probes,
- secondary data.

Fieldwork has been conducted in three shifts. Those shifts were undertaken as follows:

8

First	June 2006
Second	July 2006
Third	October 2006

First draft report was produced in August 2006, and the second/revised draft has been produced in October 2006. The report has been finally produced in November 2006.



2. Framework of Programme Implementation

THE IWCD programme began in 1998 with the support of German Agro Action. The pilot phase of the programme continued till 2002. From 2002 to 2006 the programme had main implementation phase. The programme has been implemented in 10 villages of 3 blocks in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan.

To teach the children including girls in the 'centres' (balwadi and NFE centres) and to look after the affairs of the 'centres' WAFD asked the community to identify the literate women from community itself, whom WAFD later trained to organize balwadis/NFEs/mahila mandals. Identifying the literate woman from the village itself was really difficult task at that time. Rarely any woman was educated to 5th standard or above in the target villages. Those who were literate were not allowed by their illiterate husbands or in-laws to work in balwadi. For example, in Ghata village, the community could not identify any woman who could teach in the balwadi.

9

Ever before January 2005, the centre workers were working under direct supervision of WAFD. It was one of the major mistakes that occurred during the implementation. Now only for over one and half year these centre workers have been made accountable to mahila mandals. Mahila mandals were considered to play role of prime community institution for implementing the programme, but their power to monitor and manage was kept in hands of implementing staff from the beginning. Keys of the 'centre' were also to be with the centre workers from the beginning. 'Key' is symbol of power particularly when we talk of empowerment, which was kept by the centre worker who was until till 2005 reporting to WAFD. It meant the mahila mandals were the institutions without any power. Now once the larger share (not entire) of power has been handed over to mahila mandals, they have been trying to manage the 'centres'. They not only release the honorarium of the centre worker after assessing her/his performance but also monitor the nutrition and its quality. But the centre workers still have not changed their mindset to fully accept the mahila mandals as their supervisory authorities. The centre workers even today use words of 'naukri lag gayi thi' or 'jab naukri lagi'; they had to ever call themselves the workers of WAFD. To internalize the thinking of 'volunteerism' among the centre workers is now difficult in short period.

Field staff of IWCD programme includes a Project Officer, Community Organizer (CO) and Social Workers. These personnel are responsible for facilitating the centre workers, mahila mandals, vikas samitis, and youth groups in order to achieve the goals of the programme. They also monitor the progress of

the programme and report appropriately. Half-yearly and annual reporting is done by them in format provided by German Agro Action.



3. Implication of Centres Establishment

11

IMPACTS that have been made by the centres in villages are tremendous and of high standard. These centres can never be compared with a government programme or structure, which usually fail to put the village into change process. IWCD centres have begun the change processes in the villages. For instance, the women had habit of taking bath in a week only 15 years ago. Today the women generally do not cook before taking bath. They also clean teeth. The centres have inculcated habits among the parents to send their children especially girls to schools. The younger children in place of playing in dirt, soil sit in the schools for at least half a day. Likewise, large numbers of girls today have got school education in each village. Some even go to high schools at distance. The women who were once hesitant to speak out in front of elders or outsiders now hold meetings fearlessly and raise their concerns. Of interest is that the men have undergone tremendous change. Earlier they were insensitive to women rights and gender concerns; now they not only wish to teach their daughters more and more but also let their women sit along, and also support them to discuss on village affairs. The women who were not allowed to visit their parental home alone can now visit Bharatpur without any escort. These are just illustrious changes that have taken place in each village.

The purpose for which the centres of IWCD were established is nearly achieved once the change process has been put on and aided to an extent. In principle, the village society must carry on the change process further in positive direction. The role of an NGO as change agent is limited. In Aitmadpur, for instance, after the IWCD programme a private school is established where most of the families send their children and pay good amount of fee. Formal school of the village is also quite active now. Families in most of the villages have started sending their wards in formal schools now. Private school has been established in Bakoli too.

With the remarkable achievements, the IWCD programme underwent few weaknesses too in relation to location of centres and its operation. Brahmin staff seemed to have become polar while working in the community. They failed to attract participation of other communities especially marginalized ones because of their own polarity. It has happened where Brahmin community co-inhabit such as Bakoli, Aitmadpur and Ghazipur.

Bakoli village has sheer fight between Brahmins and Gadaria. Dalits, on the other hand, reside on fringes of the village who are at far distance from current location of centre. Mr. Lakhmi Chand Sharma, president of Vikas Samiti, played proactive role in finding the land for construction of centre. No other person of Vikas Samiti took much interest in the move to find land. Lately, the Banjara community and Gadaria

community also have started taking interests in IWCD programme and its sustainability.

Other than Aronda, Ghata, Ghazipur and Aitmadpur, WAFD purchased land in majority of villages to build the centre because there was no community land in the villages. For example, land of Bakoli centre had been bought for Rs. 12000 in 1998 from Mr. Gopal, who was also not the registered owner of land. In Bhidyani and Bihadi the built structures on about 100 square yards were bought for Rs. Rs. 28000 and Rs. 14000, respectively. WAFD has got the legal agreements with the land owners, but, in most of the cases, did not get registry. As far as the community contribution in construction of centres is concerned, communities at some places spared bamboo, poles, labor, etc. While in most of the cases WAFD paid for everything.

Every centre is well maintained by the centre worker and members of mahila mandals. Hourly time table, components of IWCD, day-wise menu card of nutrition, social map of village, etc. are mounted through flip charts. Group-wise course curriculum of July month had been mounted in 3 charts. This curriculum is changed every month. Centre of Aronda is like an adventure for the children. As it is located in an old haveli, the children enjoy its legacy. Centre in



Bakoli spacious and quite well maintained. The interior of the centres in Bakoli, Ghata and Chulhera are well attractive. Bihadi centre is equally attractive but ventilation is the problem as also in Ghata and Bhidyani.

Centre of Aitmadpur opens from 8:00 a.m. till 12:00 noon, and from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Timings of balwadi are the same in many centres, whereas the timing of NFE differs in different villages. It is because the girls are taught as per their convenience of timing. Balwadi in Ghazipur begins from 9:00 a.m. only, and so is the case of Allapuri.

Textbooks, notebooks and stationery are supplied by the WAFD. A center incurs an approximate expenditure of Rs. 2500 per month including Rs. 1500 and Rs. 500 as honoraria of centre worker and helper, respectively. The curriculum being taught is in accordance to the 'guidebook' manual prepared by WAFD, which is very comprehensive and complete.

4. Impact on Child Education and Development

ONE of the objectives of IWCD programme was to impart preparatory education in balwadis to the children of 3-6 years age group, and in NFE centres to the girls who were not able to attend school due to one reason or the other. Since the establishment of balwadis in all 10 villages the centres have ever remain full of children. In first look it is clearly seen that the 'centres' have succeeded in fulfilling the educational objectives of IWCD programme.

IWCD programme had strategically increased the ratio of girls. During 1st year of establishment, the boys were 60% with 40% girls. On the other hand, the ratio of boys and girls became 50:50 during 2nd year. The percentage of girls in 3rd year exceeded that of boys: 60% girls, 40% boys. At present the girls in the balwadis are approximately, 70% with 30% boys. This strategy was adopted viewing the tendency of families not to send their girls to schools. The gender inequity was sheer in the villages of IWCD programme; the people used to resist educating the girls in schools. Such a resistance still exists among Muslim community in Deeg block. Yet the IWCD programme has succeeded reducing the resistance of the community towards change.

13



Balwadi has to have 30 children at a time. These children are of varying ages: 3-4, 4-5, and 5-6 years. During a session, which begins from July and ends in April, some children (irrespective of their class) are mainstreamed in formal schools. Yet few children each year drop out of balwadi. In new session the vacancies of the children are filled with new children. The centre worker of school usually maintains the enrollment, attendance, mainstreaming and couple of other data. In some villages, it was observed, the Community Organizer or Social Worker assists the centre worker preparing records.

Data of the enrolled and mainstreamed children in all the centres is prepared and reported every year. WAFD's reporting system is considerably strong. Village wise figures of the children in centres are mentioned in the tables below.



Table.1: Enrolled children in Balwadis

<i>Village</i>		<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
Aitmadpur	Boys	29	27	10	16	19	15
	Girls	17	18	24	23	11	20
Aronda	Boys	31	29	27	27	29	06
	Girls	14	12	21	18	04	28
Ghazipur	Boys	21	22	19	18	20	08
	Girls	10	09	08	18	12	37
Allapuri	Boys	08	18	19	15	16	12
	Girls	22	12	11	15	15	18
Bakoli	Boys	11	12	18	21	21	14
	Girls	16	18	09	16	14	26
Ghata	Boys	17	18	19	19	38	20
	Girls	22	16	24	23	14	25
Bhidyani	Boys	24	11	19	23	21	13
	Girls	16	16	12	20	13	19
Chulhera	Boys	20	20	17	17	21	18
	Girls	15	22	16	15	13	20
Bihadi	Boys	18	18	21	21	23	10
	Girls	12	12	10	09	08	21
Jeewanvas	Boys	19	16	16	20	18	14
	Girls	12	14	14	20	12	16

14

Table.2: Mainstreamed children from Balwadis

<i>Village</i>		<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
Aitmadpur	Boys	04	07	07	05	06	07
	Girls	06	02	06	06	08	09
Aronda	Boys	00	03	01	02	00	00
	Girls	02	06	06	02	03	06
Ghazipur	Boys	07	07	05	07	06	05
	Girls	14	06	15	15	14	12
Allapuri	Boys	01	02	00	01	07	04
	Girls	05	04	06	05	03	06
Bakoli	Boys	08	05	04	05	08	04
	Girls	06	11	06	07	08	05
Ghata	Boys	07	06	05	07	12	12
	Girls	12	11	06	09	10	10
Bhidyani	Boys	05	05	06	05	07	07
	Girls	08	12	11	14	13	04
Chulhera	Boys	03	04	05	01	02	04
	Girls	07	06	05	06	07	06
Bihadi	Boys	02	06	04	02	03	02
	Girls	05	07	06	08	07	02
Jeewanvas	Boys	03	06	05	02	04	03
	Girls	08	07	06	07	06	06

Table.3: Enrolled children in NFEs

<i>Village</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
Aitmadpur	30	30	30	30	30	30
Arona	30	30	30	30	30	30
Ghazipur	30	30	30	30	33	30
Allapuri	30	30	30	29	30	30
Bakoli	30	30	30	32	30	34
Ghata	30	35	31	30	30	30
Bhidyani	29	30	30	30	30	30
Chulhera	30	29	30	30	30	30
Bihadi	30	29	30	30	30	30
Jeewanvas	30	30	30	30	30	30

Table.4: Mainstreamed girl children in NFEs

<i>Village</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
Aitmadpur	02	04	05	04	06	06
Arona	02	02	03	03	02	02
Ghazipur	06	04	06	05	04	04
Allapuri	05	03	02	02	02	02
Bakoli	02	04	08	09	12	08
Ghata	09	13	06	05	06	05
Bhidyani	08	09	12	11	13	14
Chulhera	09	04	14	10	08	04
Bihadi	09	05	06	12	07	01
Jeewanvas	14	12	07	06	05	00

15



In Aitmadpur, 2 girls who once started their education in balwadi are studying in higher secondary in Gangapur city. Likewise, 1 girl is staying in Bharatpur for higher secondary studies, and 3 girls go to Bayana daily by bus. Bayana is nearest market place where school facilities exist beyond 8th standard; but due to lack of suitable transport facilities many girls are not able to continue their education. In all the villages the girls have learnt quite many things other than knowledge of regular course books. They have learnt sewing, stitching, embroidery, cooking, sanitation, hygiene, housekeeping, handicraft, craft, drawing, painting, etc.

From a hamlet located at 2 km distance, 5-6 girl children were found going to Aronda centre in afternoon. It was quite a long distance for the girls if their parents were so enough motivated.

From Ghazipur village, 3 girls have jointly hired a room to continue their studies of High School in Bayana; while 3 girls have completed their High School.

Similarly, Kamlesh is the adolescent girl now who had been learning in

NFE for last 5 years in Bakoli. She was semi-literate when she joined, now she has passed 5th class. She not only has learnt various crafts and skills but also takes part in meeting of women and events of social importance. 4-5 girls have been learning after being inspired from her. At the same time some women are jealous on her progress. In Bakoli village, maximum numbers of families send their children in private schools, as the village has educational facilities for long time. But the beginning of balwadi and NFE centre in the village brought in different kind of change. Now no child is allowed to play in dirt, rather he is sent to balwadi. A favorable environment is created in the village.

Bhidyani village has made remarkable progress. Not all the families had to send their girls to school previously; now almost all the families send the girls to school. Level of awareness of the community has increased in the village today.

About 15 girls of Mewati community of Chulhera attend the NFE. For the last 5 years, balwadi shifted to new location close to Gurjar community, and Amina was asked to close the centre because she got job in *aanganwadi* run by government. The number of girls of Mewati community is less because the mosque imam and rivals of Haqqu and Amina instigating the people against sending their girls in NFE. Mubeena, Kalsum, Taruni, etc. are the girls who have learned lot many things since joining the NFE.

Balwadis and NFE centres of Allapuri, Ghata, Bihadi and Jeewanvas have attained remarkable progress in preparing the children for formal schools.



5. Social Impacts of IWCD Programme

THE IWCD programme has brought in tremendous social impacts. In most of the villages the 'centres' have become the symbol of social change. In a feudalistic society, the social change process has to face resistance and inertia. Over a period of project tenure, the village communities underwent a social churning that at the end resulted into onset of sustained processes of change as well as tangible social and development outputs.

Changes have occurred at multiple levels: in the centres (among centre workers), in mahila mandals, in village society and in the number and profile of pupils in centres. Various impacts of the programme have been described as follows.

Changes in Attitudes

17

Centre workers in some centres mostly belong to upper stratum of caste structure. They were in the beginning inconvenient with the children of lower strata castes like Jatav, Dhobi, Naie, Banjara, etc. Some helpers had feelings of disgruntling if they were to wash utensils in which lower strata children ate. The helper of Ghazipur centre is the classical example of untouchability and caste discrimination she had to practice even with the children of balwadi. She underwent change in her attitude and behaviour towards the children as well as society. Among the centre workers Satara Devi is known to have discrimination towards the lower strata children. She has also changed considerably.

Reduction of Untouchability and Social Discrimination

The foremost impact is seen in the changes that have taken place in status and nature of untouchability and caste discrimination. Any intervention targeting the communities cannot operate isolated from socio-political influences. The IWCD programme too faced the problems of caste discrimination and politics in the villages. This has happened in all villages where the communities are not homogeneous: Aitmadpur, Ghazipur, Bakoli, Ghata and Chulhera. Caste-based discrimination, inequity and untouchability existed in every walk of life of people in the villages where IWCD programme operated. The IWCD programme drastically reduced such common form of social injustice. In the meetings organized by IWCD programmes the men or women belonging to dalit community initially had to sit separately or in last queues. But gradually the people started sitting together. Untouchability has reduced considerably.

Towards Gender Equity

Women have undergone a critical change since the project set on in the villages. The women previously had no voice even in the family let alone in the village society. They were not allowed by the men to sit together outside the family relationships. The women had to assemble and exchange their views, problems, affairs, etc. only on the special occasions of marriage, festival or else.



18

IWCD programme first time started assembling them at one place and discuss their household problems, economic drudgery, health matters, family miseries, and future of their children. Today the same women can fearlessly visit Bharatpur, far away from their respective villages. Initially the women belonging to different castes had some problems sitting together due to social hierarchy, but gradually they learnt how to work together. Not only the family environment has become considerably favorable to the women but the society in general has given ample space for the women to talk on their issues, rural development, girls education, and so on. If the Muslim women have exhibited change in attitudes, it indicates great success of the programme. Women of Bihadi village can speak openly. Women of Bihadi had to deny attending the meetings initially, whereas now they assemble on one call, that too in large number.

It was the time when the women were bound to remain in purdah (veil). Unwearing of purdah actually is the commonest indicator of change in the social status of women. Purdah has gradually reduced and the women began coming out of home boundary. When the first meetings with the women were called in villages, the men had to sit aside the women during the meetings. Once the men became satisfied and confident that WAFD had good intention behind organizing the women, the men ceased observance of the women going to meetings.

It is the men actually who have changed their attitudes a lot, as the reduction in gender inequity was not possible without reduction in the resistance of men. The men have changed their perceptions and views about the capability of women, rights of

women and girls, and need of women to participate in family and society affairs. Status and respect of the rural women have thus enhanced in the families once the male heads of the families started giving importance to the female members. Rumali of Aitmadpur highlighted the change in women's status: "We could not go out of home. Now anyone can go anywhere. None worries anything. This change is catalyzed by WAFD." So the women who were not able to come out of home now go to Bharatpur without any problem. The women in some families also buy household goods required in daily life.

Status of the women in family has certainly changed once the women began sitting together and discussing the development of the family and the village. Yet they have not reached to the level where they can take decisions at their own.

The caste factor still affects the gender rights. The castes fighting each other do not have respect for the women of rival caste. This was closely observed in Ghazipur. The Gurjar men abuse Minni a lot. It is because the Gurjars have tussle with Brahmins of Ghazipur, and Munni (the centre worker) is one of the members of rival Brahmin family. As a matter of fact the Brahmin family of Ghazipur is involved in usury with Gurjars. So the Gurjars do not like that Brahmin family at all. This has impact on Munni's gender rights only because she is centre worker of balwadi.

Impacts on Health

19

Another important change that has taken place is of the sense of hygiene and cleanliness of themselves and their children has developed among the women. After dressing the children and sending them to balwadi the women take bath and clean clothes. This practice has developed after the project set in. Under the project the women have been educated about reproductive and child health. A trained female health worker uses to visit the villages infrequently, as reported. So the health wing



of the IWCD project ever remained poor. Despite that the women have become aware of five cleanliness. WAFD also arranges the health camps in which homoeopathic medicines are given to the patients. Many patients were found in the villages happy with the homoeopathic treatment. The homoeopathic treatment has cured diseases of many people in the villages. People remember the doctor and the treatment they get. On the other side they don't remember the female health worker.

Immunization has been taken serious at the moment by the women. Women generally do not miss the chance of getting their children immunized. It is all impact of IWCD programme. In the villages of Roopwas and Deeg blocks the IWCD programme has been credited to have created awareness of immunization of children and pregnant mothers.

Strange, there was the time when no woman could dare for adopting the family planning measures particularly tubectomy. Today the women not only can talk openly on this matter but also undergo tubectomy without asking the men. Today many Muslim women also have adopted family planning in Bihadi, Chulhera and Jeevanwas. Some males have adopted vasectomy too. This is the result of empowerment process the IWCD project actually started in the villages. Moreover, from the beginning the WAFD had a clear-cut policy on family planning.

Environment in Favor of Girl Child Education

Significant change that occurred as a result of IWCD programme is the build up of an environment in favor of girl child education. In the rural society of Rajasthan the girls are considered burden on the families and too many discriminations are made with the girls even in the family. Boys are always preferred.

Previously the idea of educating the girls was a violation of societal norms; the reverse change in the perception of the people towards the girls is real achievement of IWCD programme. When the centre was established in villages, people had been reluctant to send their girls to balwadi or NFE. Slowly, the attitudes of communities changed and some girls began coming to schools. The number of boys in balwadi especially was greater than the girls in the beginning. Enrollment of girls in NFE was also low in the beginning. As the time passed by, the number of girls increased. So in such environment it is really an achievement of worth if the people started stressing on girl child education.

20

It is good enough to say that the IWCD programme has brought remarkable positive impacts in the society.



6. Nutrition Programme in Balwadis

In terms of nutritional aspects, the IWCD programme has been perfectly sustainable. The community of villages has from the beginning taken lead in contributing the food grains.

UNDER IWCD programme the nutrition is one of the components in Balwadis. The children are given mid-day meal during the schooling. The villagers contribute food grains every year in all the villages except Bhidyani where the families are landless. Other things required for preparing food such as condiments, salt, sugar, kerosene, matchbox, detergents, oil, pitcher, utensils, etc. are provided in each balwadi under IWCD programme. At present only few villages have started to contribute the accessory things also apart from food grains. Families usually contribute dung cake for fuel purpose. Sometimes the people also contribute sugar and matchbox. In Bhidyani, the food grains are also arranged under the programme. This year the sarpanch of Bhidyani has promised to contribute the grains.

21

The menu of each day of the week for meal is fixed jointly by mahila mandal and centre workers. The food is prepared as per the fixed menu. The helper of balwadi usually prepares the food but the centre worker and members of mahila mandals also assist whenever required.

Contribution of food grains is earned each year in *gram sabha* cum parental meeting by mahila mandal members. In the meeting, the IWCD programme staff presents the progress of 'centre' and problems faced, and seeks people's contribution. For contributing the grains the families are not bound to contribute a fixed quantity. A



family can contribute whatever they can. The families also contribute the fuel to cook the food. The community does this saying that they 'donate' the food grains and other things. Community of Aronda does full contribution viz. they contribute condiments, fuel, sugar, etc. too.

The mahila mandal monitors the nutrition in each balwadi. The food grains have been stored mostly in centres. Based on the attendance of children in balwadi on a particular day, the centre worker and helper

report to the mahila mandal representatives who take out the food grain and other necessary items to cook the food. This is done almost every day.

Community's tendency to contribute the food grains and other necessary items had not evolved overnight. It took shape after immense efforts of IWCD programme. In the beginning the IWCD programme had to provide everything to the children in balwadis. Gradually, the people were motivated to contribute the grains and other things.

The contribution of food grains by the communities has the potential to streamline into economic sustainability of centres. It needs to be discussed with the community and the mahila mandals and vikas samiti should take lead in doing it.



22



7. Community Empowerment and Leadership

INITIALLY when IWCD programme began, the local community had much resistance and was hostile. But gradually the beliefs of community changed and people accepted WAFD as credible organization. The confidence that people developed in IWCD programme was the beginning of empowerment process. But, is the empowerment so important for sustained social change?



Empowerment of the community especially the mahila mandals is critical in the success of the project and its sustainability. Empowerment of the people is measured on certain parameters such as altruism, confidence, leadership, skills, power, information and unity. **IWCD programme principally addresses the women and sought their empowerment so that they can sustain the activities once WAFD withdraws.** However, the achievement of empowerment is unlike the targets of a project that are somehow achieved at the end of the day; the empowerment actually is a constant process. Moreover, it primarily pertains to the devolution of power into the hands of people. It is the empowerment of the women in IWCD programme that can enable the sustenance of the project activities particularly the



operation of centres.

Several events have been examined while studying the IWCD impacts. Since the mahila mandals are considered to be the main institution behind implementing IWCD, the women of the groups should be capable of holding the meetings, writing their records, taking decisions, and coming forward to act as leaders. It was observed during the field studies that the mahila mandals were still weak in independent decision-making, record keeping, entrepreneurship and alike. For example, the



question ‘what would the mahila mandal do to sustain the balwadi once the IWCD support is over?’ was posed to almost every mahila mandal studied. None of the mahila mandal except of Aronda had answer how to do. Many of the mahila mandals replied, ‘we are doing economic activity to generate revenue from which balwadi would be sustained’, which is really a difficult task. Most of the mahila mandals asked in return how to sustain the balwadis. Some outrightly said that they couldn’t do if WAFD support is withdrawn.

24

The proceedings of meetings of mahila mandal in Aitmadpur had been found being written by the Community Organizer and Social Worker. Moreover, the CO had kept the register of proceedings, instead of the mahila mandal. It reflects that the mahila mandal is not capable of preparing proceedings. It is more serious if it is the situation at the end of project. Why does the CO keep records of mahila mandal?



It has commonly been observed that the capacities of mahila mandals were not built. They have not been allowed by the implementation staff to do the things at their own. They are still dependent on the staff for taking decisions, writing the records, and handling various management affairs.

Leadership development of several active members of mahila mandals has not been

done properly and in structured way. Informal discussions revealed that the mahila mandals were not given emphasis for major part of duration; they have lately received attention. During majority of time, the focus was to establish the centres and to run them. Building institutions and its capacities and empowering the mahila mandals were not given adequate attention.

Mahila mandal of Bakoli village has the leadership that is not so active. President and vice-president have been reelected though, but they have casual approach to mahila mandal. Girija, the centre worker in Bakoli centre, handles the technical affairs of mahila mandal including economic activities. So the central question is of 'leadership development' and 'devolution of powers' in the empowerment process. Moreover, second line leadership is almost absent in mahila mandals except in case of Bhidyani and Bihadi. In some villages, there is a risk of cleavage of mahila mandals in absence of second line leadership.

Now let us come to the power that is being captured by implementing staff in their hands. At the time of visiting Ghata village, it was discovered that the Social Worker, Mrs. Mithilesh Sharma, dictated the centre worker, Gayatri, to keep the opening time of centre as 9 a.m. (instead of 8 a.m. in other centres). It was not the decision taken by mahila mandal. So the space of mahila mandal to take decisions was encroached by the staff. Another incidence seen in Ghata was that the goods for the shop (as part of economic activity of mahila mandal) are brought from town by Mithilesh. She eventually deprived the women from learning the marketing, dealing with the merchants, traveling in bus, and facing the market and external world. Mithilesh also deprived the women from getting information, knowing at least few things, and so on, if a woman or two would have brought the goods. Thus the whole empowerment process was blocked. Proceedings of the meetings of mahila mandals were also found written mostly by Mithilesh. Building capacities does never mean we should not let the people attempt themselves. If they would not be allowed to do mistakes in the beginning, how would they learn? The people must

25



be given appropriate chances, space and opportunities to function at their own – this is the crux of empowerment; capacity building though is critical in the process.

On the contrary of above, the mahila mandal of Bihadi has been quite empowered and informed. Beginning from the record maintenance to holding the meetings and taking decisions the women take full part. For instance, the centre of Bihadi did not have chhappar (hutment roof) at the time of field visit. The women had a plan to make it soon as the children were facing some problems. It were the women of Bihadi only who asked for more and more interventions to develop their village and enlighten them.



8. Economic Implications and Sustainability

WITH the view of sustaining the 'centres' economically, IWCD programme has now started promoting economic activities. Economic activities had started in 4 villages by mid 2005, whereas in rest of the villages it began from May 2006. The economic ventures that have been chosen so far are: daily needs shop and bisati shop. 4 daily need shops and 3 bisati shops have been established in centres of Aitmadpur, Bakoli, Ghata, Allapuri, Ghazipur, Bihadi, Jeevanwas, Bhidyani and Aronda where usually the centre centre workers sell the items and keep records. Women of mahila mandals have been given Rs. 2500 each to purchase daily need items from nearby town, and the women look after the shops. These shops can hardly generate Rs. 500 a month each until they increase the goods to an investment of not less than Rs. 20000. In Ghata, the women also have just started board chalk making. Doing goatry and tea leaf trading are also proposed by the women in some villages.

27

In Ghazipur, an outsider contractor engages the women and children in making dona pattal (leaf cup & plates making). The mahila mandal of Ghazipur tried to have lease of plucking dhak tree leaves. The forest ranger refused saying it requires lot of money to be paid to Forest Department as royalty. On the contrary, the implementation staff did not try seriously to find out the reasons as to why the women group could not obtain the lease on the resource that an outsider can get on. Nobody among the staff of IWCD knows what were the procedures adopted to grant lease to the private contractor. The involvement of the gram panchayat in granting the lease needs to be challenged and a pressure has to be built over the Forest

Department officials. Implementing staff was observed reluctant on indulging in such seemingly difficult affair.



Similar case is of Bhidyani from where stone chips are excavated. The village families do labor work in the mines. But in getting lease on these mines it is involvement of bit higher investment. Gram panchayat again is involved in giving recommendation for grant of lease to contractors. However, if the women group is capable enough to do the business nothing is impossible. Yet, it would have been done long ago when project started.



Kitchen gardening and compost making have also been promoted as economic ventures. Kitchen gardening is being promoted in individual families, while the compost making is done by mahila mandals. In 6-7 villages the compost making has started, which is seen as revenue generating activity. Observations made in the field revealed that compost making can no longer be sustainable economic activity, that too if done by mahila mandal. Availability of dung is crucial to the success of this venture. On the other hand, the kitchen gardening is done at individual family level.

In a bid to start economic activity the mahila mandal of Aitmadpur was given Rs. 2000. Santara, the centre worker, withdrew money on 29 May 2006 to purchase the goods for the shop. Just after withdrawing the money, Satara went outside the village for 2-3 weeks and kept

money with her. It was the incidence of carelessness and irresponsibility of the women. Moreover, the group women had also not questioned Satara for the mistake. Resultantly, no profit the shop earned till the time of field studies.

28

Mahila mandal of Ghata inspires to start goatry as an economic activity. The women ask for she goats from IWCD, which they would rear for a year. From the first progeny, each woman would return one male cub to WAFD and one female cub to next woman waiting for it. The women were not ready to give any cub from second progeny, and so forth. The project in itself is viable in terms of supporting the livelihood of families. But from the point of view of supporting the operation of centre, the project is expected to contribute partially.



In some villages like Aitmadpur and Chulhera, the people have mistaken the messages of closure of IWCD programme support and decoded as “*balwadi band ho rahi hai(balwadi is going to be closed)*”. Nobody raised the voice that the people would carry on the balwadi after the support of IWCD is over.



Mahila mandal of Bakoli does not have any idea of how to sustain the centre. Women responded passively on the shut down of the centre if the community does not support from January 2007 onwards. On the other hand, Giriraj, leader of Banjara community, has taken lead to mobilize all parents to pay fees, and Vijay of Brahmin community took responsibility for starting goat project.

When interrogated for sustainability, most of the centre workers of centres kept silent. None was ready to sustain balwadi and or NFE without getting any remuneration. Centre worker's remuneration is major chunk of cash required each month to continue the education of children in centres. The community of all villages except Aronda was found hesitant to support the centres financially, though they can contribute the nutrition.

29

The field study reveals that there are only 2 centres (of Aronda, Ghata) that can be carried on even when the WAFD support discontinues. In Aronda, the women of mahila mandal and thrift & credit group have a blueprint ready for continuing the centre. They told that they would charge the families on per child basis and raise the money for centre other than earning from doing economic activities. On the other hand, in Ghata, Gayatri is the inspired centre worker who grew from a volunteer committed for the cause. She was found ready to carry on without remuneration, which is the major hurdle to sustain the centres.

For rest of the centres, it is the menfolk that must be taken into confidence if centres needed to be sustained. Actually, it is the men who have resources in their control and who may contribute, if they like, for the continuance of centres. Women would now take



longer time to reach the level when they can be able to support the financial needs of running the centres in long run. Operating for 2-6 months is not matter of concern.



9. Institutionalization and Participation

COMMUNITY institutions are vital for implementation of a project proposed to address needs, problems or, simply, involvement of community. The institutions act as vehicle or a platform to galvanize change process or to diffuse an innovation. Few things need to be clarified here that the institutions in villages are composed of the individual or families who cannot be seen isolated from socio-political environment of the village. These institutions may be crafted afresh or can be remodeled if existing before onset of the project/intervention. Moreover, it is the intra-institutional governance that determines functioning, malfunctioning or dysfunctioning of an institution.

Like many other development projects, IWCD programme tended to create the following two types of institutions:

- a. Mahila Mandal: Group of exclusively women, one mahila mandal was formed in each village. Mahila mandals basically need to look after the centres, monitor delivery of education in centres, assist centre workers in running centres, motivating the families for educating the girls, taking the rural women into socio-economic change process, raising contribution of the community, looking after nutrition distribution to children in balwadis, undertaking income generation activities, acting to sustain the centres in the long-run, and so on. Mahila Mandal was also constituted with the objective of women's own reform.
- b. Vikas Samiti: Constituted rhetorically by men and women in equal numbers, these samities (committees) exist in every village of IWCD programme. The number of members varies village to village, ranging from 10 to 12. Responsibility of Vikas Samiti was to assist in establishment of centre, mobilize the families to send their children for education, facilitate mahila mandals to undertake supervisory roles, mobilizing and generating the resources for operationalization of centres, and supporting in execution of IWCD programme.

Women's participation is comparatively high in the programme. The women specifically look after the operation of the centre, cooking of mid-day meal and monitoring the quality of nutrition. During seasonal works on-farm the participation of women of mahila mandals is affected. In Aitmadpur, only the Gurjar women were reported not to take active part in management of centres and mahila mandal affairs. On the other hand, Gurjar women are very active in Aronda village. They not only monitor the centre but have also converted the centre into a platform of social, economic reform. As the IWCD programme set on in the village in 2001, the women's high degree participation supported immensely the

institutionalization of mahila mandal. Instead, the institutionalization not only enabled the participation but also motivated the community to sustain the centre even once IWCD programme is over. Bakoli's mahila mandal seems to have undergone institutionalization process, but it is yet not mature. Recently, there have been made some changes in the leadership of mahila mandal of Bakoli; and thus mahila mandal has become active now. Present president of Ghata's mahila mandal, Ms. Chandrawati, has been quite active and responsible. But at the time of field visit it was a big fight among the women for money distribution of the almost disintegrated thrift & credit group. Being the centre worker of Ghata centre, Ms. Geeta made mistake to become member of thrift & credit group and keep accounts. The dispute for money erupted when Ms. Geeta left the centre. The president of mahila mandal was one among the fighting group for allegedly misappropriated money. Since Ms. Gayatri was once the leader of mahila mandal, who is centre worker now, the mahila mandal took good shape of an institution. The group is cohesive; the members are vocal to the point that they at least think for sustaining the centre by contributing economically.

Like Aronda, the members of mahila mandal in Bihadi are very active and despite Muslims' conservatism they are keen to educate their girls as also wish to develop the village. The women in Bihadi have even challenged many times the ruling or conspiracy of mosque's imam, a powerful person in Muslim villages. Women of mahila mandals are equally active in Jeewanvas, Ghazipur and Allapuri village. The women in Jeewanas particularly played proactive role in establishing the balwadi and NFE centre. But the mahila mandals of Aitmadpur and Chulhera are relatively weak.

32

Institutionalization of mahila mandal and the education of girls in Chulhera village are threatened in a way by mosque's imam (who leads prays in mosque). Socio-religious and micro-political barrier are the basis of the girls education and change of women being affected in Chulhera. Underlying the said two barriers is the vested economic interest of mosque imam. Among illiterate Muslim villages of particularly converted Rajput community (Mewati community is one) the mosque imam (who

can never be a woman except the one now in western China) generally teaches the children including girls right in mosque. He usually teaches how to read Quran and Urdu basics of language. When the girls who were taught by mosque imam get married, the centre worker of the girl is given gifts by in-laws of the girl. In this way, a mosque imam receives many expensive gifts and money when his pupil girls get married. Amina, the present centre worker of NFE girls, in a way minimized the economic gains of mosque imam as she teaches the girls. This is the basis of conflict behind Muslim girl child education in Chulhera. The present mosque imam, who has substantial influence over orthodox Muslim families, has used the tool of religion and culture for misguiding the majority of Mewati community in the village. Taking favor of many illiterate and orthodox men, he rumored that WAFD is



associated with Qadyani sect of Islam which is, supposedly, to impure the Islamic fiqh (set of Islamic laws making constitution to rule life of mankind). He also used against IWCD programme an event when several NFE girls were taken to Bharatpur on the occasion of World Women's Day. Allegedly the girls were asked to dance and sing, which is not allowed in Islam. Though this whole is a distorted and manipulated set of messages, the mosque imam has used it for his vested interests thereby inhibiting lot many families not to send their girls to balwadi or NFE centre. So the participation of particularly the Muslim community is affected. Other factor adds to the buck. When Amina is the centre worker at NFE centre at her residence, her husband Haqqu use to be president of both Vikas Samiti and Village Education Committee (VEC) of government's formal school. Some rival families of Haqqu do not tolerate the dominance of single family over IWCD programme. Therefore, the complex reasons have marred any institutionalization to evolve for universalizing the education and gender equity.

The interference of religious leaders depends on the personality of the religious leader himself, and on the kind of community. In Bihadi village the women took strong action against Imam who had to instigate the village youths to interfere the IWCD activities. So it seems the community especially the women in Chulhera are not much organized to challenge the Imam.

Field studies reveal mixed status of institutionalization and the participation of people in development interventions. To comment in general, sufficient time was not given to the institutions to evolve after their formation, which suppressed its inherent capacity to take up the projected activities in sustainable way. Cultivation of these institutions did not receive adequate attention in IWCD programme's implementation mechanism. Foremost problem lies with Vikas Samities, which had

to be key institutions in carrying forward the project. These institutions are more or less president-run institutions. Mr. Bhaggi Ram Sharma of Aitmadpur village is the member, but his giving stress on mind to remember the total number of members in Vikas Samiti reflects that Vikas Samiti does not hold meetings at its own. From the discussions with staff it was revealed that 2 meetings are organized with the villages in a year in which all villagers are supposed to come. This meeting is known as *aam sabha* or *gram sabha*. It is rather a general meeting of village community in which the villagers are primarily asked to contribute the food grains for balwadi. Few other matters of centre are also discussed. Vikas Samiti was reported to hold monthly meetings; but if it is the case the members of Vikas Samiti might know one another.

Vikas Samiti in Ghazipur is not active at all. Lakhmichand Sharma, president of Vikas Samiti of Bakoli, showed his inability to call any other member of Vikas Samiti except Adhinesh Kumar. He also showed his inability to raise any community contribution through Vikas Samiti. This reflects nothing but lack of institutionalization of Vikas Samiti, which remained almost one-man institution. The



leadership of Vikas Samiti failed to engage various other members of the institution who belong to different communities e.g. Baghel, Dhimar, Bawania, Sinsinwar, Banjara, Gadaria, Jatav and Kumhar. As a matter of fact the village is divided into two socio-political groups: revolutionist and reformist. Reformist group led by Lakhmichand Sharma (president of Vikas Samiti) is for 'centre' is because Ms. Girija Sharma is the centre worker. The rival revolutionary group led by Gadaria community is reported to oppose the 'centre', which is partially true. They rather oppose the single-community control over IWCD programme. Thus the institutionalization did not happen once the IWCD programme in Bakoli village took polar approach during implementation. The 'centre' became part of village politics and took favor of one of two fighting groups. Vikas Samiti of Chulhera has been somewhat active as the president, Mr. Haquu, is popular person in the village. But his leadership is bit unaccepted among the Mewati community; yet the villagers largely accept him. The vice-president of Vikas Samiti, Mr. Sri Ram, is also the panch in gram panchayat.

Despite the above, the IWCD programme has now begun to involve the Vikas Samities relatively more than previous years. Men particularly showed greater interests in the project and sustainability issues. Yet it is not the case in every one of the 10 villages. In Ghazipur, for example, the men (especially from Gujar and Jatav community, who are in majority) are passive towards the balwadi centre. On the contrary, the men of Allapuri are very positive towards the balwadi and NFE. Recently, the men of Bakoli, particularly belonging to Banjara community, also have become active.

As the IWCD programme had emphasis on women empowerment and girl child education, the WAFD staff had to focus more on women and children while giving less attention to men. So involving the menfolk actively was overlooked during the implementation process. The men would have played critical role in sustaining the programme in long run.



10. Capacity Building

CAPACITIES of community institutions, field staff and other key workers are critical to the successful implementation of any programme. Capacity of a person pertains to accessibility of information, skills and knowledge and new technology, and ability to develop and strengthen the sustainability of institutions and organization. Under IWCD programme WAFD organized various type of structured training activities apart from constant strengthening of the workers.

Training of centre workers received primary attention in capacity building component of IWCD programme. The centre workers were given training every year during the tenure of project. Experts of curriculum development, teaching methodology, teaching communication and personality development had to be called every year to impart training to the centre workers. For the centre workers a wonderful 'guidebook' was also developed that deal with almost everything of balwadi. Day-to-day curriculum is also given in the guidebook.

35

Centre workers have observed tremendous changes in themselves following the trainings. For instance, Santara Devi in Aitmadpur previously had not to come out of home. After undergoing 3-4 trainings she learnt how to draw the figures and teaching children of balwadi and NFE. Initially, she felt uncomfortable with the children of other parents. But gradually her attitude changed. Roopwati of Aronda village was semi-literate; she can read but still weak in maintaining records and report writing. Her passion to the younger children is her winning merit over her weaknesses. Her younger daughter assists her in writing the records.

A classical example of capacity building is of Gayatri of Ghata. She was once the president of mahila mandal and taught in Ghata centre for one and half month when erstwhile centre worker, Ms. Manoj, was absent. Later she grew up as a centre worker of Ghata centre and not only learnt to read and write but also to manage the centre properly. She prepares some records of the centre, while Mithilesh Sharma makes some. Another classical example is of Mrs. Nasreen from Bihadi village. She is landless and a helper of Bihadi centre. When she went on exposure to Orissa, she became active. Now she is good health & sanitation activist as well as trained birth attendant serving in surrounding villages also. She was tortured by formal schoolcentre worker whom she opposed vehemently. Phoolwati in Bhidyani village also used to be semi-literate before joining the balwadi. After undergoing regular trainings, she grew as good centre worker. On the other Mohar Singh in Allapuri emerged as best centre worker among all 10 centre workers in IWCD programme. Capacities of Munni Sharma also increased to an acceptable level.

Other centre workers in rest of the centres are equally capable of handling the children and manage the centres. So in terms of building the capacities of centre workers, IWCD programme has achieved great success.

Selected women of mahila mandals were taken on exposure tour to many places. Ranges of camps have also been organized for these women focusing health issues, importance of girl child education, government schemes, etc. However, there has been lack of serious effort to enhance the skills and leadership qualities of the identified leaders of mahila mandals, yuva dals and vikas samitis. Training the selected members of the institutions crafted in the villages for development purpose is essential from the point of view of institutionalization and carrying forward the projected activities. Presidents and or vice-presidents of vikas samitis and mahila mandals particularly had inherent capacities to lead, that is why they were elected by rest of the members; yet they needed sharpening of their skills and capacities. Moreover, second line leadership is almost absent in all these institutions, particularly in vikas samitis. However, second line leadership is well placed in Ghata village. Mahila mandals have adopted the procedure of changing the presidents and vice-presidents in a year. The election of mahila mandal leaders was frozen for 2 years in between.

Reportedly, trainings were organized for the implementing staff on some crucial subjects but the staff didn't imbibe the skills and attitudes positively. Less impact of trainings on the quality of field work was reflected while interacting with the currently working staff. Various happenings in the field during the implementation of project indicate that the staff personnel were lacking desired skills, foresightedness and vision about even so many minute things. Thus the trainings and multidimensional capacities of the staff personnel were found missing in the IWCD programme. Managing the affairs and meeting the targets does not qualify to be considered as the interventions with so much capacity the field staff had. Simultaneously, it cannot be ruled out that several individuals had and have certain capacities necessary for project management.



11. Conclusion

THE IWCD programme began in 1998 with the support of German Agro Action. Pilot phase of the programme continued till 2002, and from 2002 to 2006 it was main implementation phase. The conclusions of the study have been summed up in the following points:

- I. IWCD centres have begun the social and economic change processes in the target villages. Rural society has undergone alteration of power relations among different communities, families and individuals. The centres have changed habits of parents who now ensure sending their children especially girls to schools. Large number of girls today has got school education in each village. Men particularly have undergone tremendous change. Earlier they were insensitive to women rights and gender concerns; now they not only wish to teach their daughters more and more but also let their women sit along with the males.
- II. Women also have undergone a critical change since the project set on in the villages. The women previously had no voice even in the family let alone in the village society. IWCD programme first time started assembling them at one place and discuss their household problems, economic drudgery, health matters, family miseries, and future of their children. Today the same women can fearlessly visit Bharatpur, far away from their respective villages. Purdah has gradually reduced and the women have begun coming out of home boundary. Not only the family environment has become considerably favorable to the women but the society in general has given ample space for the women to talk on their issues, rural development, girls education, and so on.
- III. The status of the women in family has certainly changed following the IWCD programme. Yet they need more time to reach the level where they can take decisions at their own.
- IV. A sense of hygiene and cleanliness of themselves and their children has developed among the women. After dressing the children and sending them to balwadi the women take bath and clean clothes. This practice has developed after the project set in.
- V. Among the social impacts of IWCD programme, the foremost impact is seen in the changes that have taken place in status and nature of

untouchability and caste discrimination. The IWCD programme drastically reduced such common form of social injustice.

- VI. An environment in favor of girl child education has created as a result of IWCD programme. In the rural society of Rajasthan the girls are considered burden on the families and too many discriminations are made with the girls even in the family. The balwadis have over 70 percent girls, and the NFE centres have been successfully imparting practical education to the girls along with functional literacy.
- VII. Member women of mahila mandals are bit dependent on the implementation staff for taking decisions, writing the records, and handling various management affairs. Leadership capacities of active members of mahila mandals though need further sharpening. However, few mahila mandals have been quite empowered and informed. Beginning from the record maintenance to holding the meetings and taking decisions the women take full part.
- VIII. IWCD programme has promoted economic activities through the mahila mandals in a bid to sustain the balwadis/centres. It is premature to comment on the success or failure of the economic activities, as they are quite new. However, the women of mahila mandals show willingness to sustain the centres after the withdrawal of WAFD. Women would actually take longer time to reach the level when they can be able to support the financial needs of running the centres in long run.
- IX. As far as the impact of IWCD programme on alleviating the poverty is concerned, the poverty connected to educational backwardness, poor health, ignorance and gender inequity has been addressed adequately. Yet the economic poverty could not adequately be focused. However, the recent initiative of mahila mandals to undertake economic activities has the purpose of both strengthening the household economy of women members and sustaining the centres once WAFD will withdraw.
- X. Emphasis of IWCD programme remained more on women during the implementation. Critical role of menfolk was overlooked. Now it is the menfolk that need to be taken into confidence for sustaining the centres.
- XI. Among the capacity building programme the training of centre workers received primary attention. The centre workers were given training every year during the tenure of project. For the centre workers a wonderful 'guidebook' was also developed that deal with almost everything of balwadi.
- XII. Staff personnel of IWCD programme were found lacking desired skills, foresightedness and vision, particularly for sustaining the programme.

- XIII. The programme has high degree of replicability, provided it is conceived for similar socio-economic situations. In other socio-economic milieu, implementing such programme is easier because the society in Bharatpur is one of the most difficult societies in terms of setting a change process. If the WAFD has implemented this programme in Bharatpur, they can implement it in other parts of country too. It is only Uttar Pradesh where the societies are tedious as are in Bharatpur.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMME

In order to further develop and evolve the present IWCD programme, several recommendations have been made keeping the findings of the study into consideration. The recommendations are:

- i. The monitoring needs to be strengthened in strategic manner. It should be associated with the study approach so as to understand and evaluate the relevance and need of the interventions. Target achieving approach should not be dominant all the times, which otherwise impedes the quality results.
- ii. Better if the emphasis is given to marginalized and excluded communities from the beginning. At this stage the approach can only be reorganized to limited extent. Yet it can be tried.
- iii. The capacity building exercises would have considered building skills and strengthening inherent capacities of mahila mandals and vikas samitis. Training on group management skills and leadership development can be organized if the programme support continues.
- iv. Men need pretty enough attention (if not equal) in women centred projects. In fact in the rural society isolation of men is not possible because they de facto influence the majority of decisions in the society.
- v. Such a programme that requires fund commitments should be sandwiched the economic improvement programme. The families engaged in economic activities can thus generate funds to support education-based programme.
- vi. For the girls, continuing the education beyond primary or upper primary school is difficult due to lack of upper primary or high schools in the vicinity of their respective villages. In such situations, the IWCD programme should have components of advocacy so that pressure can be built on district administration to open upper primary or high schools within the reach of remote village, or to avail adequate transport facilities for the female students.
- vii. Recruitment of the programme staff should be done keeping in view the profile of rural society in which interventions are done. Even after rigorous orientation the upper caste staff continue to discriminate between lower and

upper caste communities, practice their taboos, or just have mental blocks while they work in villages. Urban people should be avoided to take charge of working in villages.



Annex-I: Some Case Stories

■ Women to save the society

Government intervention in village Bhidiyani has ever gone astray. Looking back at worse situation, Bhidiyani Mahila Mandal (BMM) came forward to undertake some community development activities. BMM has 35 female members in the group; all the members are empowered and trained by Women's Action for Development (WAFD). They developed a 3 years community development plan (CDP). The first task taken up by the women group was renovation of community well. All the villagers had to use the well water; but during rains the rainwater had to contaminate the well, as also water from bathing and clothes washing had to enter the well.

41

As a result of dirty surroundings of the well the flying insects increased. Villagers had been facing many water born diseases. For, villagers also complained to gram panchayat and sanitation officer and requested them to cement the area, which was always full of sewage. But nothing changed. Then Bhidiyani Mahila Mandal decided to step forward to cement that particular area. They contributed some amount of money from their own and also asked villagers to contribute. They purchased 2 trolleys of sand including mud. All BMM members contributed their labor to reconstruct the area near the well. Now the situation is better at least in terms of availability of safe drinking water.

Some of the man of Bhidiyani village report that after the interventions of WAFD many things have become possible for them. The women otherwise didn't have that much confidence.

■ Unity took a strong stand!

In March 2006, WAFD organized the International Women's Day in Bharatpur. Women and girls from all target villages participated the programme. On returning from the programme, women and girls from the village Bihadi (Deeg block) faced problems regarding some rumors. Actually, the community of that area is Mewati Muslims. They want their women to follow purdah and should not participate any public functions.

Members of mahila mandal took a stand on this and tried to convince their family members against the rumors. The strong step of the mahila mandal members shut the mouth of rumor.