

MID TERM REVIEW

**FACILITATING WOMEN IN ENDEMIC POVERTY REGIONS OF INDIA TO ACCESS, ACTUALIZE,
AND SUSTAIN PROVISIONS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

REVIEW REPORT (June 12, 2013)

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fund for Gender Equality

The Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) was launched by UN Women in 2009 to support and advance women's economic and political empowerment at local, national, and regional levels through the provision of grants to government agencies and civil society organizations provided on a competitive basis. These grants seek to fast-track commitments to gender equality mandated in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and regional agreements, among others.

In its inaugural grant-making cycle (2009-2010), the FGE announced that 13 Implementation Programmes in Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East and Africa would receive grants to fast-track action on national laws and policies to advance gender equality. Awarded programmes reflected a range of interventions in commitments to gender equality laws and policies and embodied unique combinations of strategies, partnerships, and target beneficiaries.

FGE is committed to learning from and with its grantees and as part of the their Monitoring Framework is undertaking mid-term reviews and final evaluations of the Fund's Implementation Programmes. The objective of these reviews is to track, assess, and widely share the lessons learned from pioneering grant programmes and to contribute to global know-how in the field of gender equality, including best practices towards achieving the goals laid out in MDGs, BPA and CEDAW, and other global and regional agreements.

Mid Term Review of the Programme 'Facilitating Women In Endemic Poverty Regions Of India To Access, Actualize, And Sustain Provisions On Women Empowerment'

Background

PRADAN (India) was one of the 13 organisations world-wide that was awarded a grant in July 2010 to implement its programme 'Facilitating Women in Endemic Poverty Regions of India to Access, Actualize, and Sustain Provisions on Women Empowerment'.

Implemented by a coalition of two national civil society organizations - PRADAN and JAGORI - with extensive experience in mobilizing women around livelihoods and empowerment; this program seeks to work with a large number of poor rural women, including over two-thirds from Scheduled Tribes and Castes, organized into self-help groups (SHGs) and their solidarity associations; in four states of India beset with endemic poverty; to enhance and institutionalize their effective economic and political participation impacting their status in family and community including engagement in local government bodies; these are also the goals enshrined in the National Policy for Empowerment of Women 2001, as also the 11th [Five Year Plan of the Government of India](#). Several national policies and programmes to bring about gender equality have also been framed over the years. India has also ratified various international conventions to secure equal rights for women. The national policy and programme frameworks have over the last two decades evolved from using a welfare approach to an empowerment and rights-based one. Despite these developments several gender disparities persist, which have consistently been outlined in various human development reports. Women's groups also continue to highlight the high prevalence of violence against women and a range of gender-based discriminatory practices.

Over the years micro-credit programmes facilitated through the formation of self-help groups (SHGs) have become the main strategy to implement women's development programmes. The Government of India and the various state governments implement several large-scale SHG programmes to enhance women's economic and social empowerment. In recent years however, reviews and research have started pointing out that while such programmes may bring some economic benefits they do not necessarily change women's status or challenge gender relations within the home or society. As the programme under review is primarily being implemented through SHGs and its related structures, the overall context of such programmes is also relevant.

The programme being reviewed is designed within the framework of the National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) and the thematic areas outlined therein and the relevant plans under the 11th Five Year Plan. The programme also seeks to work extensively with critical schemes and programmes related to women's economic and social empowerment like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), state government programmes on scaling up SHGs (e.g. Mission Shakti), and centrally sponsored programmes like National Rural Livelihoods Mission, as well as national and state level women's commissions.

The Programme In Brief

Keeping in mind this context, over a period of four years the programme proposes to work with 75,000 women from economically and socially disadvantaged communities who have been organised into SHGs in nine districts across four states. The districts and states selected for the implementation of the program are among the most backward and poorest in the country. The programme seeks to bring about transformative changes in gender relations at the levels of self, the family, and public institutions and also seeks to enhance and engender women's economic and political participation through a process of training and capacity building on a range of gender issues.

The stated programme goal is *"By 2020, rural women from marginalized communities and their collectives, in 9 districts in 4 states of Central India, will be able to raise their voice against violations and access their political and economic rights as mandated under Central and State government policies."* In order to reach this goal the programme has outlined four outcome areas and outputs and activities related to each. Quantitative indicators against these of the outputs are also defined. The four outcome areas are as follows: Increasing women's awareness and participation in local self-governance structures and processes (Panchayati Raj Institutions) (Outcome 1); enabling associative tiers of SHGs to address issues of gender based inequality within the home and outside (Outcome 2); enhancing women's sense of equality as economic actors in the household (Outcome 3); and enhancing responsiveness of duty bearers and PRI representatives to issues raised by the community (Outcome 4).

Evaluation Methodology

The overall purpose of the mid-term review (MTR) was to assess the progress made by the programme so far in achieving results against stated outputs and outcomes and to suggest possible measures to strengthen the programme. The MTR is a qualitative review of the programme and used a participatory and consultative approach in line with Human Rights and Gender Based MTR standards as specified by the UN Women guidelines. All the figures presented in the report are those provided by the Implementing organization. The MTR was conducted between April 5 and June 10, 2013 and was based on both primary and secondary data. The review team visited four districts in the four states and interacted with a range of stakeholders. The reviewers used a variety of tools appropriate to the stakeholders to gather data as per a Tool Kit developed during the Inception

Phase of the MTR. The report presents its findings under the following heads: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, and Partnerships.

Key Findings and Suggestions

As per the results being tracked by the Implementing Partner PRADAN, 78% of the outreach has been achieved by the programme at the mid-term stage. Though the MTR did not gather quantitative data it assesses that the programme is well on track with regard to its outreach as per the stated outputs.

Work has been initiated in all four outcome areas and progress in each was evident. The MTR team found that the greatest strides have been made under Outcome 2, resulting from the capacity building efforts that have gone into building a basic understanding around gender based discrimination. While progress within the different outcomes was visible across locations, the pace and intensity of work varied.

There has been shift in the Implementing Partner's approach from 'working with women' to 'working with a gender perspective that informs all its programmes', which is significant and critical to strengthening and sustaining the work initiated through this programme.

Relevance

The programme's design has responded to needs identified by the organization and the women that it has targeted. Gender related issues and discriminatory practices at the various sites have been identified and incorporated into the programme's planning. The programme's relevance was validated by the fact that women have participated in large numbers in various activities of the programme.

Effectiveness: Outcome 1

The programme has taken various steps to generate awareness about schemes and entitlements as the necessary first step towards undertaking any claim making activity and large numbers of women have been reached through its information dissemination activities.

There has been an increase in levels of awareness regarding the Gram Sabha (Village-level meeting of electorate in a Panchayat) and the importance of women's participation in these forums. An unintended outcome of this has been that women have actually participated in electoral processes, with extremely good results. This is one of the positive outcomes of the programme.

There has been an increase in the claim making abilities of women and the process of application filing has been initiated. The associative tiers have also begun to understand their new roles in the claim making process.

More in-depth information on schemes, its procedures and on-field support for the women is required in the next phase. The programme is poised to undertake steps to deepen their work in the area of claim making.

Effectiveness: Outcome 2

Significant advances have been made towards building a basic understanding of gender equality at the levels of the organisation (PRADAN) and at the grassroots, where a cadre of field based resource persons and trainers has been developed.

Several strategies and activities, including campaigns using theatre and other forms of public events, have been used to spread awareness. A range of gender related issues have been taken up by the SHGs – including responding to gender-based discriminatory practices like witch hunting, dowry, early marriage; social practices that have a significant negative impact on women like alcoholism; gender biases evident in education, food practices, health (including taboos around menstruation).

Though violence against women (VAW) has not been specifically mentioned in this outcome it has emerged as a significant area of intervention in this programme. Silences around VAW have been broken and women have begun taking up cases. In some locations structured interventions like the Nari Adalats (women's courts) are playing an important role in addressing issues of violence.

To build on these achievements in the next phase, there is need for more sustained and systematic programme on the ground that translates conceptual learning from training into concrete action. Consolidation of various efforts, which at present may appear ad-hoc, would benefit the programme in displaying more cohesive and consistent results. The programme would benefit from a detailed sharing of strategies and lessons learnt across locations.

Effectiveness: Outcome 3

As a result of this programme PRADAN has begun to engage with livelihood related issues from a gender lens. An important intervention has been to develop women's identity as farmers, as a result of which women are beginning play a greater role in decision-making on agriculture and other livelihoods issues and have greater control over income.

Women are now the focus of technical trainings, which has helped break stereotypes related to women's technical abilities and their roles not only as workers but also as experts.

Innovations in the area of livelihoods, for example the Farmers School in Purulia, organic vegetable farming in Balaghat (and others that may not have been covered) are impressive and need to be rigorously documented and disseminated.

In the next phase attention could be paid to scaling-up and replicating innovations across sites, developing innovations in non-agricultural livelihood options, developing strategies to enable women's access to markets, strengthening women's information base on livelihoods-related schemes and entitlements, further analyzing their livelihoods programmes from a gender perspective. As work on MGNREGA has been taken up across locations, this could be more systematically developed.

Effectiveness: Outcome 4

Initial steps have been taken to engage duty bearers with the issues being faced by the members of associative tiers. As this Outcome is the focus of the next phase of the programme, cohesive strategies to engage with duty bearers will have to be developed. Efforts to track the 'responsiveness' of duty bearers can be made through a system of effective monitoring of the follow-up of the claims being made by the women.

Capacity building

Through the cascade model used for gender trainings a large number of PRADAN staff members have been trained and training has reached the grassroots level. The technical partner Jagori has built a basic and common understanding on core conceptual issues across the tiers, providing a foundation upon which to build in the coming phase. The effectiveness of the capacity building inputs is evident from the significant results achieved under Outcome 2.

The development of a group of trainers at the level of Community Resource Persons, Community Service Providers and community leaders is an important achievement of the programme. The training inputs provided thus far have been appreciated at all levels of the programme.

Variations across locations on the understanding and skill levels of this group were evident and the MTR recommends further investments in their capacity building. Strategies to offset the limitations of using the cascade approach in terms of depth and follow-up of inputs provided needs to be looked into. The emerging needs are in terms of more in-depth training on gender, greater on-field support, specialised training on issues like VAW, and further training on rights and entitlements and livelihoods from a gender perspective. Capacity building on advocacy was identified as a felt need. To meet the large training demands of the programme developing an in-house gender training unit could be considered.

Efficiency

The management structure evolved to manage and monitor this programme is able to respond to the complex needs of the programme. Regular mechanisms for reporting and review and planning, including jointly with Jagori, are in place and functioning well. Greater intensity and regularity of inputs by the programme's Core Team would benefit the programme as would more spaces for reflection and sharing within and across teams.

The teams maintain extensive records of quantitative details of trainings, input sessions, participation in events etc., across locations. At present there are no systems to gather or maintain qualitative data with a common understanding across locations. The need to gather robust qualitative data both to reflect the programme's achievements as well as to plan further programme and advocacy strategies was evident. PRADAN is in the process of developing qualitative indicators and the MTR suggests that this be done at the earliest.

Sustainability

PRADAN's revised approach to gender developed during this programme is being institutionalized in its new strategic plan. At the field level, the agenda for the next phase must include steps to institutionalize change by further strengthening the leadership role women can play.

Partnership

A noteworthy strength of this programme is the partnership between two different organisations with different areas of expertise working towards a common goal with commitment. Both PRADAN and Jagori have assigned anchors for each location, which has facilitated communication, decentralized planning and helped build relationships between the two agencies. Jagori through its network has brought on board a number of senior gender experts, other resource organisations, and enabled PRADAN to connect with global initiatives like One Billion Rising, which has added dynamism to the programme.

The partnership between UN Women, PRADAN and Jagori has also been mutually rewarding. An illustration of this collaboration is the PRADAN, Jagori, and UN Women FGE Facebook page, a resource for sharing information. UN Women could play a more proactive role in advocacy and facilitating learning exchanges from this project with other governance projects being implemented by UN Women.

KEY FINDINGS

The evaluation findings are organised according the following sections- Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Partnerships. As several of the short-term impacts (one of the domains outlined in the Inception Report) were addressed while answering the section on effectiveness the question on impact has not been separately answered.

D.1.RELEVANCE

To what extent do the programme's goals, outcomes and strategies respond to beneficiaries' needs, socio-economic and gender contexts, and country policies?

This overarching question related to the relevance of the Gender Equality Programme (GEP) to women's needs and socio-economic contexts was explored through four subsidiary questions as outlined in the Inception Report. These relate to the extent to which women's needs have been addressed by the programme, the process through which needs were assessed, the incorporation of emerging needs and the relevance of the capacity building inputs to identified needs¹.

D.1.1 To what extent are women's needs being addressed by the programme?

Women from marginalized communities are at the centre of this programme. Recognizing however, that women's needs are shaped by larger contexts – socio-economic and policy levels – and are mediated through the perceptions and assessment of the Implementing Partner PRADAN, we examined this question in terms of synergies between needs identified at three levels (a) gender and socio- economic contexts (b) perceptions of the project staff (c) women's responses to the programme².

Gender And Socio-Economic Contexts

Responding to contextual needs: The programme document states that the project will be implemented in pockets of endemic poverty. The selected project sites are all areas with poor economic, social and gender indicators. Discussions with the PRADAN teams revealed that the organisation's work prior to this project had focused on analysing and responding to economic challenges. The building of a systematic understanding on social and gender realities has been introduced through this programme. By putting the spotlight more sharply on gender indicators, this project, has enabled the identification of critical gender related issues and discriminatory practices in the project locations. Some of the common issues which have emerged and been responded to during the course of this project (and mentioned during the field visit) were: domestic violence, gender-based discriminatory practices like dowry witch-hunting, and early marriage , gender gaps in education, women's low awareness about entitlements and participation in schemes, inability to play decision making roles within the household and in agriculture and livelihoods related activities,

¹ The fourth question on capacity building will be addressed in section on Effectiveness (question 2.5) to avoid repetition and to enable a more cohesive analysis.

²Though the overall question mentions relevance to country policies, as the MTR team was informed that policy level work will be taken up in the next phase of the project, this aspect was not looked at as part of the MTR. The advocacy related issues are mentioned in responses to evaluation questions on sustainability.

and low participation in local governance. The district teams have also identified district specific needs.

Context of SHG Programmes: As the GEP is being operationalised through SHGs, an understanding the broader context of large-scale Government-led SHG interventions is also important. Recent research studies and other reports have critiqued such programmes for being technocratic in approach and viewing women from an instrumental perspective. The agenda of such programmes has by and large not included the empowerment of women. Thus, even though women participants of such programmes may report increased incomes or may have greater access to credit they have not been able to challenge or negotiate gender relations within the family or at a societal level. Gender related structural and ideological barriers that prevent a woman from having control over her savings or playing a greater role in intra-household decisions are not addressed by such programmes.

PRADAN's own analysis has been that they too have not approached their SHG work from a perspective of women's empowerment prior to the GEP programme and as a result their work has not led to significant improvements in women's status. During field visits the reviewers found that the shift in approach was not only something PRADAN needed, but that the women on the ground were also articulating needs that went beyond savings and credit. Women recognized the differences between the large-scale government-initiated SHG programmes (which are also operational in the areas where PRADAN is working) and the approach being followed by PRADAN. For the women what sets the GEP apart are the discussions on gender issues and the inputs they receive on issues including domestic violence, dowry, and awareness on rights and entitlements, as mentioned above.

Perceptions Of The Programme Staff

Acknowledging women's needs: PRADAN staff members at different levels recognized that the GEP had propelled them towards acknowledging and making visible gender related issues and needs as these were being articulated by women, which they would previously ignore. As a staff member said, "Even if we heard of a case of violence, we would just hear, but not say anything." Team members have over the past few years begun to recognize the gaps in their approach. A core group member remarked, "We worked with women but the focus was not on working on gender issues. It was more a livelihood and family welfare programme. Discussions amongst the PRADAN executives revealed that there were gender discriminations in the programme, which we were not addressing – a huge gap." PRADAN team members had also realized that there were new issues that required tackling. The Hazaribagh Team Leader stated, "In Hazaribagh a conscious decision was taken to include both young and old women in SHGs. Mobility of older women in our groups has increased not due to our interventions, but because they are older, their kids have grown up and so mobility will be high anyway. Hence we need to include younger women. If their mobility increases then a real change would have been brought about." This programme has opened up a space to recognize previously ignored gender issues and latent needs have surfaced as a result.

Proactive choices: Some of the teams proactively chose to participate in this project because they saw this as an opportunity to respond to the identified needs of their team. The Purulia team, for example, shared that women had responded very enthusiastically to an adult literacy programme that uses a curriculum that is informed by a gender perspective. This had made the team aware of women's interest and commitment to working on gender related issues. The team thus actively sought to be part of the project. Similarly, PRADAN's present Executive Director (earlier Programme Director for Orissa, shared how he had asked the present Karanjia team leader to have the district included. His keenness stemmed from the fact that, "Visits to the field did not show any

improvement in women's status despite increases in income or savings. I felt that our approach, where women were seen as a member of the family needed to shift to first focusing on women and then family. Hopefully both are possible."

That all the teams chose to be part of the project indicates that the project addressed needs of the area, exemplified by this statement by the Koderma team anchor, "The programme threw up something new, it has given us a structure, put women's issues on the agenda, given us a new portfolio." The needs assessment process built on the teams' evolving understanding of issues and the GEP provided a timely opportunity to translate this into a concrete programme. As many of the PRADAN members said, "We needed to know how to do this work."

Relevance To Women

Participation and perceived value: The field visits showed that women were enthusiastic about many of the activities being undertaken by the GEP and had participated in large numbers. For the review team, this was an indication that the activities relate to women's interests. According to the figures provided by PRADAN, 33,509 women have attended street plays on entitlements under public schemes, 48,000 women have attended cluster level Adiveshans (large meetings) and 37,063 have been part of village level sensitisation campaigns. Moreover, the fact that women reported that they have gained from participating in the programme's activities is another indication that the programme is addressing their needs. As an SHG member in Purulia said, "We have been meeting for 10-12 years but in the past two years we see a change. There is more self-respect, we are more self-confident, we are discussing many more issues – sanitation, health etc."

What constitutes needs? The MTR team also felt that when working with women, relevance or needs is not only expressed when discussing violations or development issues alone. Women experience a sense of empowerment through a variety of ways. One such commonly reported change was the fact that women were now able to buy saris of their choice. Many had saved money and bought new saris to attend the Mahadiveshan and talked animatedly about it to MTR members. "I always have to wear what my husband buys for me. Going to the market to buy the sari I felt very proud. I could choose what I would wear." The MTR appreciated that such expressions have found space even in their presentations.

Reaching the target group: The project document states that the programme will focus on rural women from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds; this includes Dalits, adivasis and OBCs (two-thirds from SC/ST as per the project document). Though the team was not presented any disaggregated data in terms of caste and community it was reported to the MTR team that data is available and that the project was reaching women from the stated marginalised communities. At the mid-term stage the programme may wish to reflect upon whether they are reaching the 'most' marginalised within marginalised groups that the programme seeks to reach. The only landless group (brick kiln workers) in Purulia that the MTR team met had the least information, did not show any increase in their mobility, had not participated in the Mahadiveshan (annual meeting attended by all members of the federation running into several thousands), nor were they engaged with livelihood initiatives in any significant way. A general analysis of SHG interventions is that SHG programmes do not reach the most marginalized; it would be useful therefore for PRADAN to reflect on this and see how they can reach out to these groups, so they too can come within the ambit of the programme.

D.1.2 How was the needs assessment carried out and how did the programme at the conceptualization stage incorporate identified needs?

Needs assessment at the initial stage was carried out in 3 ways (a) PRADAN's own assessment based on their previous work (b) a baseline study and a (c) gender assessment.

Organisational Needs Assessment

In the previous section, the perception of the team members has been discussed. Presented here is the organisational perspective. During the initial presentation and interviews with senior PRADAN members, it was shared that even prior to the initiation of this project, PRADAN had been undertaking reflection exercises regarding its engagement with gender issues. When tracing their journey with regard to the organisation's understanding and mandate related to gender, PRADAN identified four distinct points of transition, the most recent being the transition from 'a solidarity and well-being perspective' (2006 to 2010) to that of Gender Equality (2011). This last transition coincides with the initiation of the GEP and includes developing an understanding on patriarchy, unleashing women's leadership potential, enhancing women's awareness, access to rights and entitlements, increasing political participation and engendering their livelihoods related work, which are all included in the objectives of the GEP. The most recent shift was premised on a reflection of their work where they found that taking up economic activities did not necessarily or automatically alter gender relations within the home or in the public sphere leading them to conclude that "working with women is NOT an indicator of working with an approach of gender equality and that you can continue to work with women, carrying forward or even reinforcing patriarchal notions."

Aligning Women's Needs And Programme Needs

PRADAN took steps to further align the programme's strategies and activities with women's needs once it was initiated. In Kesla, the initial six months were spent in enabling the community to take charge of planning before embarking on large-scale implementation. The present Balaghat team leader, who was earlier part of the Koderma team reported, "When I was in Koderma, it was a difficult time for the entire team as there were gaps in the needs of the community and the programme deliverables. So there was dissatisfaction in both the PRADAN team and the community as well. We organised two needs assessment workshops and three categories of needs were discovered: first, social mobilisation, as the women wanted to strengthen their clusters and federation and work on their issues. The second stemmed from the fact that women are not given any spaces in the village to address and resolve their issues and are not allowed to participate in the village governance. The third was livelihood strengthening."

Baseline Survey

A baseline survey was conducted in partnership with ISST in all the nine project districts. The objective of the survey was to (a) provide a picture of the current levels of awareness and participation by women in the four outcome areas of the project and (b) to provide a framework for planning location specific interventions (ref. executive summary of baseline survey report). Data was gathered on women's awareness and exercise of political rights, access to government schemes, economic rights and social and legal empowerment.

The data generated from the survey enabled the teams to put figures to their perceptions and informal assessments. In many cases team members said that the results of the baseline revealed lower figures than they had anticipated. For example, the survey found that 53% women were unaware of the Gram Sabha and 72% said they did not participate. 20 years after the passage of the

Panchayati Raj Act, 58% were unaware of the provision for women's reservation. More importantly for the team, the baseline provided data on issues where data is unavailable, namely mobility, perceptions on girls' education, violence, women's health practices including menstruation, age of marriage etc. As the baseline was completed after the programme got underway, team members reported that it was not used to inform the programme's planning but has been useful in building the teams understanding and as a situational analysis. "There was a need to know the status of women in the area. The baseline survey gave an important perspective but not really to design the project. It is not yet clear how we will use it to assess results at the end," shared a Core Group member. The MTR team was informed that the baseline survey results has been used at the level of PRADAN and Jagori and had not yet been shared back with the federations. The team could consider whether this would be a useful exercise to undertake.

Gender Assessment

Jagori carried out an extensive process of assessing gender needs both at the level of PRADAN team members at the field/community level. Seven field visits were made by the Jagori team between February and April 2011. Jagori's most important finding was the need to begin with developing conceptual clarity on gender related issues and to build an in-depth understanding of patriarchy. While this was needed at all tiers of the programme, Jagori concluded that the first intervention should be at the level of the PRADAN team. The reports of these visits became the basis for a joint planning exercise with Jagori, conducted in April 2011. As the field visits were very varied a consolidated report was not prepared, but the individual field visit reports were used as a basis for planning the capacity building strategy and the common factors that had emerged across reports were factored into the various training modules and designs.

D.1.3 How have emerging needs subsequently been incorporated?

Project review meetings at the level of PRADAN and joint review meetings between Jagori and PRADAN have been the main forums to discuss project progress as well as to identify emerging needs. In addition, a series of review meetings were conducted in each of the sites in December 2012, which form the basis of planning the inputs for the upcoming phase.

Emerging needs include capacity building inputs (discussed in the Sections on Effectiveness and Partnerships) as well as district/team specific issues. For instance the Koderma team reported that there was potential to work on the issue of HIV/AIDs; Kesla has worked on trafficking and would like to work with young boys and girls on this issue; Karanjia wants to initiate dialogues between the younger and older family members on sexuality and witch hunting; the Dindori team has identified land rights as an issue. While the emergence of district specific needs is essential to further contextualise interventions, these also pose a big challenge in terms of programme planning, design and capacity building, as different issues require specialized knowledge and skills and contextualized intervention strategies. While the initial programme needs have been addressed, emerging needs in terms of training, translating learnings from trainings into programmatic inputs, and needs related to programme deepening have been articulated. These need to be concretely addressed in the next phase of the programme. Some of these have been further elaborated in the capacity building section.

SUMMARY OF SECTION

The programme's design has responded to needs identified by the Implementing Partner PRADAN and the women who the programme is reaching out to. PRADAN's teams at different locations had identified that the women they had been working with were ready to take the necessary steps towards addressing gender inequality. PRADAN has also made a shift in their approach: from

‘working with women’ to ‘working with a gender perspective.’ They now recognize savings and credit activities alone will not automatically alter gender relations in the family and society and that different strategies are required if changes at these levels are to be brought about. This shift has enabled them to identify gender related issues at various programme sites which they have subsequently incorporated into the interventions and activities of the GEP. The relevance of the programme is validated by the fact that women have responded by participating in large numbers in its various activities.

D. 2. EFFECTIVENESS

How effective has the programme been so far towards achieving goals, outcomes, and outputs?

In order to answer this question we asked five sub questions, four of which relate to the programme's outcomes and one relates to capacity building.

D.2.1 How effective has the programme been so far in initiating women's participation in local governance structures, institutions and processes?

This question pertains to Outcome 1 as elaborated below

Table 6: Outcome 1, Its Outputs And Indicators

Outcome 1	Indicator
Rural women (75,000) from marginalised communities (tribal, dalit and backward) increasingly exercise their right to participate in local governance structures, institutions and processes.	Number of women from marginalized communities who participate effectively in the Gram Sabha and/or make other efforts for contacting duty bearers about their entitlements.
Output 1.1	
Increased claim making abilities of women (by 75% women as per baseline) from marginalized communities to demand their entitlements as mandated by the Government under NPEW & relevant state policies.	Number of women who submitted applications to duty bearers or in the Gram Sabha, towards exercise of claims.
Output 1.2	
ii. Pool of leaders/ trainers/ facilitators/ service providers associated with women's collectives' support (75%) to access their rights and entitlements and in raising their issues in local governance structures.	Number of resource persons/trainers/service providers associated with SHG associative tiers who are able to independently support women to access entitlements and participate effectively in governance forums.

Key observations related to Outcome 1³

In order to understand progress made in terms of this outcome we looked at the following dimensions: Awareness about Gram Sabhas and other Panchayat related information; Gram Sabha attendance and effective participation in Gram Sabhas; and participation in electoral and other Panchayat processes.

Awareness about Gram Sabha

In order to attend and participate effectively in Gram Sabhas the first step is to have information about Panchayat processes and procedures. According to the baseline survey, information levels related to political participation are low. To build awareness the programme has undertaken several activities, which include trainings, orientations, information dissemination at events like the cluster Adhiveshans and Mahadiveshans where the outreach has been large. According to figures provided

³ As there is an overlap in our observations related to Output 1.2 and Outcome 2 and capacity building we have not addressed Output 1.2 here.

by PRADAN, 30,462 women have been reached through 2,340 meetings to build awareness about the relevance of institutions, rules and duties. Based on field interactions and review of documents, the findings of the MTR confirm that there has been an increase in levels of awareness regarding the Gram Sabhas itself and of the importance of participation in them.

Gram Sabha Attendance and effective participation in Gram Sabha

PRADAN's figures indicate that 40% of SHG members participated and raised issues in Gram Sabhas. The team surmised that greater awareness has led to greater attendance in Gram Sabhas. In Karanjia for example, SHG members have started attending Palli Sabhas (ward meetings) and have realized their importance. Progress reports suggest that attendance of federation, cluster and SHGs leaders in Gram Sabhas has increased. However, with regard to raising issues in Gram Sabhas, the MTR team believes more rigorous reporting is required. Attending the Gram Sabha does not mean that the women were able to raise issues while there. Women in many FGDs said they were participating in Gram Sabhas for the first time and did not feel confident or have enough information to be able to raise issues. As Gram Sabhas are known to be male dominated spaces, the MTR team feels this is an understandable challenge. Therefore the reviewers felt that if effective participation is the goal (at the outcome level), more in-depth work with the women is required. The strategy of pre-Gram Sabha intervention (FGE Monitoring report, Jan-June 2012) appears to be a good strategy that could be taken up.

Participation in electoral and other Panchayat processes

An area where the project has made effective interventions is with regard to bringing women into the political process (although this is not specified as an outcome, output or indicator). The MTR team would like to specially mention Karanjia district in Orissa where 250 discussion sessions were held with federations to assist in the selection of willing candidates and to develop strategies for support. This strategy has shown remarkable results, where 137 SHG members contested 127 seats, which 88 women won. This is a staggering 69% of all seats. The administration has been very proactive with regard to strengthening PRI processes (including holding Gram Sabhas and Palli Sabha meetings) and the team has used this opportunity very successfully. SHG women reported regular attendance and participation at Palli Sabha meetings. Elected ward members in Karanjia felt they were able to influence the process of beneficiary identification and ensure their inclusion in the list for Social Security Schemes (Pensions, Indira Awaas Yojana) at the Gram Sabha level.

For example, as reported from Rayagada district, also in Orissa, a total of 138 SHGs have influenced their village plans to more women-centric needs. It would be worth analyzing in what areas and in what ways women are able to exert this influence, as this was not clear from the report. Even in Karanjia for example, neither the team nor the women were able to give concrete examples of how increased women's participation had resulted in influencing the Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) planning process to become more gender sensitive. Having entered the Panchayat system women are keen to work in this space and there is tremendous potential for PRADAN to develop strategies for deepening the work on this outcome in the next phase.

Overall Observations

Gram Sabha attendance is dependent on the how diligent the state is in holding Gram Sabhas, leading to differences amongst states in terms of project results. Findings from across the country show that the reality is that Gram Sabhas are not regularly held and participation of women is generally poor. This means that efforts at the field level need to be supported with advocacy efforts at state and district levels by the PRADAN teams for Gram Sabhas to be regularly held. Moreover, there are various context-specific realities that affect attendance and participation, including the readiness and enthusiasm of both the women and the team to work on this issue. This leads to

variations in results across project sites. The Purulia team, for instance, has been hesitant to work on this issue, as the Panchayats in West Bengal are intensely political spaces and the team anticipates that any intervention by them would have a negative impact on their groups. In Koderma district in Jharkhand where Panchayat elections have also been held during the project period, both the response from the women and the encouragement from the team to stand for elections were not noticeable. Elections were held in the state after nearly three decades; the government machinery was not proactive and the women were not particularly responsive. A review of the reports suggests that possibly the most work and substantive progress on engaging with PRIs has been in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Recognising that each state will have its own contextual specificities and that it is not necessary for all teams work on all outcomes with equal emphasis, it would be useful to make explicit what the targets are for each of the programme sites.

Observations related to increased claim-making abilities to demand entitlements (Output 1.1)

This output corresponds to a range of interventions made by the GEP related to raising awareness on rights and entitlements to various government schemes. The programme has identified six schemes on which it proposes to work systematically. These are the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), the Right to Education (RTE), the Public Distribution System (food security) and Social Assistance Schemes (like Pensions). To understand progress against this output, we examined the following dimensions - awareness regarding schemes; filing of applications as a means to claim entitlements; miscellaneous strategies to enhance women's claim-making abilities.

Awareness

Several strategies and activities have been employed to increase women's information and awareness levels – training of resource persons by experts (657 women reached through 16 events); discussions with women at group, cluster and federation levels (12,787 women in 541 events); organising campaigns and street plays (through which 33,509 persons have been reached). In Dindori, 74 women have been trained on Social Audit processes. As stated by a PRADAN team member, “The focus has been on articulating needs, mapping institutional access, and identifying which important actors need to be focused on – all this in a participatory manner by the women themselves through the use of innovative tools like mobility mapping and institutional mapping.” The field visits also showed that women have benefitted from their participation in various events and processes organized by the programme.

Awareness: Further Observations

During the field visits we tried to gauge the level of information women had acquired regarding the various schemes and how they had used this information in claim making processes. The MTR team found that of the six selected schemes, more work had been done on MGNREGA and the social assistance schemes. The Karanjia team reported having made significant progress on increasing work under MGNREGA and many women had got up to 100 days of work. In Purulia and Balaghat women had submitted applications and increased their number of days of work.

Through the participatory exercises and FGDs that were carried out it was found that the levels of awareness and information on a number of the other schemes amongst the women, resource persons and even PRADAN staff were basic. SHG members in Purulia, Koderma, and Karanjia acknowledged that they had little knowledge of the entitlements under RTE, or information about School Management Committees (where 50% of the seats are reserved for women). Therefore, their visits to the school or other facilities are of a general nature rather than to monitor the functioning of the school or exercise their rights as committee members. For example, an SHG member in

Purulia reported making regular visits to the Aanganwadi Centre, but could not articulate why she went there or what she was monitoring.

While acknowledging that the reviewers' experience is based on just a few site visits, one suggestion for PRADAN is to review the information dissemination strategies from the point of view of the depth of information that the women themselves retain. Attendance in large events does not automatically result in increased awareness. Currently the GEP is dealing with the classic dilemma of how to balance outreach and depth: will women be able to use the information thus gathered to actually make claims? For instance, while the training programmes for the CRPs and CSPs (who are far fewer in number than the women) are for 2-3 days, the sessions for women are for merely a few hours. An increase in the duration of interventions, on-going programmes to reinforce the information imparted during these interventions, and the availability of more detailed information about specific procedures are required for women to become more effective in the next phase. The programme is developing and field-testing pictorial content in the form of flip books and posters, which will be used in the next phase to spread awareness amongst the women members. This is a positive step towards increasing women's awareness and participation.

Filing Applications

The GEP has identified the submission of applications as a significant activity in the process of enhancing claim-making abilities, a logical step following increased levels of information. PRADAN reported that 21,000 women had submitted applications, attended Jan Sunwais (Public Hearings) and accessed government officials. The field visits revealed that the process of submitting applications had begun in all the field sites and women were enthusiastic about this work. Women reported that engaging in such activities gave them a new identity, greater mobility (as they had to move out of the village) and expanded their sphere of influence. We also found that the submission of applications for various entitlements had been introduced as a regular part of the agenda for SHGs, Clusters/VLCs and Federations. This is a positive movement towards reaching the specified goal.

The Next Phase: *Observations*

During the field visits, the MTR team explored the qualitative dimension of the application filing process in terms of follow-up activities and women's participation in the process (of following up). Though the indicator is stated in terms of numbers of applications filed (which is more than adequately being met by the programme), following up on the applications filed is important for women to feel a collective sense of empowerment, to strengthen their identity as a group and to increase collective action processes. In order to sustain women's interest to continue working on such issues, it is also important to track the application filing process and see it to its conclusion, which may not necessarily result in a successful outcome. A simple reflection activity on the cycle of application filing will develop women's critical understanding of institutions and strengthen their future advocacy and claim-making abilities. Further, there is a need to ensure that women gain a sense of agency in this process. Two examples from the field make this point clear. In Koderma, women responded to a call by PRADAN for the large scale filing of applications for latrines. The women's sense of agency in the whole process was limited. Such efforts could end up being mechanical exercises. At the field level where women have been able to take the process beyond application, there was a much greater sense of empowerment and ownership. For example in Purulia, women managed to get some roads sanctioned through their own actions and were not only able to narrate the entire process but more importantly mentioned the fact that their identity in the village had changed from just being SHG members to being recognised as a group with the skill and ability to bring development to the village.

The Next Phase: Other Strategies To Enhance Claim-Making Abilities

As the overall output is framed in terms of making demands on the system, we also looked at other strategies employed by women to enhance their claim making abilities vis-à-vis duty bearers. In fact, the FGE Monitoring Reports have reported several cases where women have individually and collectively made demands, which have been very powerful. These include demanding better functioning PDS systems (Hazaribagh, Kesla, Dindori), the opening of new Aanganwadis (Hazaribagh, Kesla) and the opening of PHCs (Balaghat). During the field visit too there were examples where SHGs and VLCs have taken the initiative and approached the administration and elected representatives. Such experiences have been extremely energizing for the women.

For the next phase, PRADAN may wish to reflect upon whether such collective action is occurring only in sporadic pockets or at a level which reflects a change in the associative structures with women seeing themselves as a collective pressure group. The MTR team understands that making the shift from being a microfinance programme would take time and acknowledges that several steps to move in that direction have been taken. The programme appears poised to deepen and strengthen women's claim making abilities. The strategic lessons learnt from various positive efforts of collective action as given above should be shared more systematically so that a critical mass of such efforts can be generated and there is a change in the self-perception of the women in the associative tiers vis-à-vis their role.

The qualitative dimension of the work in this domain could be strengthened with greater clarity in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the different tiers (SHG, Cluster and Federation) so as to facilitate better information flows regarding the status of submitted applications between them. PRADAN's initial presentation to the MTR team had elaborated a 'Community Institution Architecture' where envisaged roles, strategies, and actions are spelt out. We found that while women are clear about the roles of the different tiers when it comes to savings and credit and agriculture/livelihoods related work, the same clarity is missing when it comes to claim-making, possibly because this is a new and emerging area of work. Some further inputs in this area would strengthen the programme.

SUMMARY OF SECTION

Having information is considered to be a source of power and this is especially true for women, particularly those belonging to disadvantaged groups who are typically denied access to information. The programme has taken various steps to generate awareness generation about government schemes as the necessary first step towards undertaking any claim making activity and large numbers of women have been reached. There has been an increase in levels of awareness regarding the Gram Sabha itself and the importance of participation in Gram Sabhas. The unintended outcome of women actually participating in electoral processes and achieving good results is extremely positive. There has been an increase in the women's claim making abilities and the process of application filing has been initiated. The associative tiers have also begun to understand their new roles in the claim making process. More in-depth information on schemes, their procedures, and on-field support for the women is required.. The programme has already started planning for these steps, and is poised to deepen their work in the area of claim making in the next phase.

D.2.2. How effective has the overall programme been so far in addressing gender-based inequality at home and outside?

This question pertains to Outcome 2 as elaborated below

Table 7: Outcome 2, Its Outputs And Indicators

Outcome 2	Indicator
Associative tiers of SHGs (village level committees, cluster committees, SHG Federations) support women in facilitating expression of gender based inequality and taking steps to address the same in homes and outside	Number of associative tiers that have taken initiative in expressing and addressing issues of gender based inequality at home and outside
Output 2.1	
Enhanced understanding of women about patriarchy and its manifestation in their own lives and other societal structures	Number of women from marginalized communities who are able to understand patriarchy and its manifestations, in their own lives and in societal structures
Output 2.2	
Enhanced abilities of 60% women leaders of associative tiers of SHGs to support members in facilitating expression and/or addressing gender based inequality	Number of women leaders from marginalized communities who are able to facilitate women to identify and take steps to address issues of gender based inequality
	Number of women from marginalized communities who identified and made efforts on issues of gender based inequality

To analyse Outcome 2 and related outputs we looked at the following areas: Understanding of patriarchy (relates to Outcome 2 and Output 2.1) and Gender based issues taken up by women, including Violence Against Women (Output 2.2)

D.2.2.i. Understanding of patriarchy and its further dissemination to the grassroots

Changes in the PRADAN team: The MTR team found that significant strides had been made in building a basic understanding of gender equality both at the levels of the organisation (PRADAN) and at the grassroots, where a cadre of field-based resource persons and trainers has been developed. While there is no specific indicator related to building a gender perspective with PRADAN, this has been an area where the programme has made significant investments, which has shown significant results. The MTR found that changes had been brought about at all levels of PRADAN staff both in terms of individual change as well as in the way they approach their work. The MTR team recorded several testimonies that validated this. “Now I have started viewing incidents from a woman’s perspective and have taken responsibility to use my gender trainings to bring about changes in my family. I am encouraging my sister to study and get economically independent before getting married,” said an executive from Purulia. While an executive in Balaghat said, “The way we are engaging with the community is different from our other approaches. We provide handholding and support for agricultural extension and after this project we have strengthened ourselves much more to provide support regarding social issues too. Today, the team is also more confident to take a political stand with the public. We have also moved on the issue of livelihoods to go beyond income.”

Recognising Complexities

PRADANs team recognises however, that there are challenges and the change process is far from complete. A statement by a Core Group member exemplified this, “Even male members of the office are sharing their behavioral changes towards their wives with us. However, women are sharing with their groups their inability to change things in their own homes, which is really frustrating.” The team also shared their confusions and feelings of ambivalence, which often get articulated when faced with challenges on the field. This example from the Balaghat team, discussed with the reviewers, is illustrative of these contradictions. An SHG member, who is very active in the federation and is a member of a theatre group, faces domestic violence at home. The team is aware of this fact but is unsure of how to take action in this case. The team was already dealing with the dissolution of one theatre group whose members were not allowed to perform publicly by their families. They are faced with the dilemma of persuading her to bring up her case and risk losing a strong member of their team. For the woman herself, there is the contradiction that she is performing plays and facilitating discussions on gender based violence, while she submits to violence in her own life.

PRADAN team members recognize these contradictions and strongly articulate a need for a regular platform for them to reflect, analyse, and strategise about such issues on a regular and ongoing basis, as trainings are one-off events. That such issues were even shared by the teams indicates an open environment of discussion that can be built on. It is also reflective of the fact that working on gender equality issues is a long-term and complex process with no clear cut solutions or answers.

Changes Amongst The Trainers And Women

The training strategy has followed a cascade approach – beginning with the PRADAN team, followed by the development of a Trainer Resource Pool, which in turn takes the trainings down to the women at the level of SHGs. In order to achieve an understanding on patriarchy and gender, a number of activities – training and field based – have been undertaken during the course of the project. 19,775 SHG members have participated in gender sensitization meetings. Changes attributed to these trainings were visible at the level of the trainers’ pool and at the level of the SHG women. Young CSPs that the MTR team met in Balaghat spoke about how this new orientation had changed them. One persuaded his mother to start participating in the ‘samajik baithak,’ (community meeting) to which earlier only his father used to go. Another shared how he had ensured that a new property bought by the family was put in his mother’s name.

Programmatic Conceptual Shifts

The MTR team also found that shifts had been made in terms of conceptual understanding around gender issues. One of the most significant of these was the recognition of women’s contribution in agriculture and developing their identity as farmers. The recognition and identification of widows as single women, which allows them a sense of self-worth and the space to question discriminatory practices associated with widowhood is another area of change that was reported to the reviewers.

Strategies To Spread Awareness

The review team found that several strategies and activities, including campaigns and other forms of public events, have been used to spread awareness. According to PRADAN’s figures 37,063 people have been reached through village level sensitization campaigns. Based on the field visits, the MTR team saw that the teams (Karanjia, Balaghat, Koderma) that had incorporated theatre performances into their implementation strategy reported very positive results. For instance, the anti-alcohol campaign has been very successful in Koderma. Such events have been effective in translating what team members and women have learnt into action and in reaching large numbers of women. In Karanjia, the MTR team had the opportunity of participating in a theatre performance and found it

to be very effective. The audience was engaged and the facilitator was largely able to address the questions that came up in the interaction after the performance. Such events are important in engaging the entire community, initiating a dialogue with men and energizing and building the confidence of the team. Theatre team members have undergone significant changes in terms of their understanding and skills. As a PRADAN member reported, “Married women used to hesitate over taking off their bangles and not wearing sindoor (sign of marriage) when performing male roles, or if they had to go back home in their costumes. Now they are able to analyse their situation more rationally and have convinced family members and others.” This initiative taken by PRADAN of introducing theatre by bringing in an experienced resource person (Jaya Iyer and her team) has been extremely effective. Further, the reviewers observed that in the districts where a multi-pronged strategy has been used – comprising trainings, village meetings, and public events (theatre or campaigns) – the understanding on gender based inequality is deeper and the momentum greater.

The Mahadiveshans and cluster level Adhiveshans have also been important platforms to build solidarity and forge collective identities. As a federation member from Purulia said, “It is an opportunity for us to come out of our village and meet other women from different groups, villages and clusters and share our ideas and experiences. We get very emotional watching role-plays and theatre on issues that are very close to our hearts.” Mahadiveshans have been part of PRADAN’s activities prior to this project but what was repeatedly pointed out to the review team was that the GEP has brought new energy to the event and the planning process is much more participatory. Women leaders have been far more involved in the process and in shaping the agenda. Jagori resource persons have also participated in these events. This has been an important contribution of the programme towards embedding a gender perspective into the ongoing activities of PRADAN.

Breaking Stereotypes

Besides dealing with issues of discrimination or violence, the MTR team would like to highlight the positive impact of undertaking public events like football tournaments that creatively lead to breaking gender stereotypes at a societal level. The initiative was started in Koderma, but has now spread to several districts and is a good example of how teams can learn from each other. All the teams that the MTR visited spoke animatedly about the football tournaments and how they challenged various gender norms and stereotypes about women. It has been a creative, energizing and enjoyable event for women and such events are important in expanding the understanding and expression of gender discrimination beyond that of violations.

D.2.2.ii. Gender based issues including VAW taken up individually and collectively by women (Output 2.2)

Wide Range Of Issues Taken Up

Based on field visits undertaken and documents reviewed, the MTR found that a range of gender based issues have been taken up by the SHGs. These include an understanding of gender-based discriminatory practices like witch hunting, dowry, and early marriage; of social practices like alcoholism that have a significant negative impact on women; and of gender biases evident in education, food practices, and health (including taboos around menstruation). However, the team felt that there is a need to collate the instances of these issues that come up sporadically and use them to build a collective understanding towards a strategy for collective action. For example, in Koderma where work on violence is being undertaken in a concerted manner, during a FGD the women shared three different instances of how they had subverted attempts by family and/or SHG members to carry out sex selective abortions and had dealt with the backlash from their families as a result. As women are taking individual action in specific cases that involve challenging family structures this may be an issue around which the federation in Koderma could build a strategy for collective intervention.

Speaking About Violence

Though violence against women (VAW) has not been specifically mentioned in this outcome it has emerged as a significant area of intervention in this programme. The critical step of breaking the silence around VAW was clearly visible and is an important achievement. Women have begun to speak out within their hoand publicly (SHG meetings, campaigns etc.) about VAW for the first time. There is an interest within the teams and among the women to take this issue forward and to work on it systematically. Silence has been broken around both domestic violence and societal violence (for example, witch hunting, sex selective abortion or domestic violence resulting from alcoholism). Interactions with grassroots trainers during field visits showed that they had developed a basic understanding of violence related issues. The MTR was particularly impressed by the Karanjia trainer team. This team has taken steps to ensure the quality of trainers including the ability to translate their understanding into session plans, working on deepening skills, and developing more tools for trainings. In addition, the team has provided hand-holding support to trainers as they conducted sessions in the field. These steps could be looked at by other teams as well.

Dealing With Cases Of VAW

The review team found during their visits and while reviewing documents that a number of violence related cases had been taken up. During the field visits cases were shared by trainers, SHG women, federation and cluster leaders, and PRADAN team members. What was striking was the agency of women in taking up these cases. In many cases it was found that women had taken up these issues at the level of the SHG. This was also an area that they expressed an interest in working on in the future.

However, the nature of support from the PRADAN team in different locations differed. For example, there is a far more hands-on approach followed by the Hazaribagh and Karanjia teams. The Hazaribagh team has been engaged in the regular follow up in court of a rape case involving a young tribal girl, while simultaneously ensuring her rehabilitation in a school. The positive judgment that found the rapist guilty was a heartening outcome given the time and emotion the team had invested in the case. The Karanjia team discussed the case of a very young girl who was raped by her neighbor and made to marry her rapist when she was found to be pregnant. She was then abandoned by him once the child was born. Members of the team as well as the women leaders followed the case but have not had direction on how to deal with its complexity. On the other hand, in Purulia the support of the team is more from the outside. During a participatory exercise, a woman shared a case of domestic violence where members of her SHG had helped her and taken her to hospital and the police station. Finally, the police compelled her to compromise. In this case the women were at the forefront while dealing with the case, while the PRADAN team was less hands-on. Whether it is the women taking on cases or the team, the need for direction and strategy was evident and clearly articulated to the MTR team as an emerging need.

Structured Interventions

Some of the programme sites have regular and formal spaces to engage with VAW through the Nari Adalats (Hazaribagh, Kesla and Koderma). In such spaces, women who have been trained on legal issues take up cases with the support of the PRADAN team. In Koderma for example, it was reported that the team has taken up 60 cases over three years of which 11 have gone to court. It is also worth mentioning that the Nari Adalats and their links with the administration (the police in the case of Koderma) have become stronger. Cases are brought to the clusters and are referred to the Nari Adalat only if they cannot be dealt with at the cluster level. In these districts such a formal intervention has meant that the team has more in-depth knowledge of dealing with such issues and has enabled the grounding of violence related work. It has also provided a new identity (in addition savings and livelihoods related work) to the team.

The Next Phase: Observations

The MTR team felt that the groundswell that had been created to deal with VAW was an achievement of this project, especially keeping in mind that there are few rural organisations that work systematically on this issue. In the present situation where there is increased awareness and interest in taking up cases of VAW, clear mechanisms and specialized expertise to deal with the demand is required, particularly at sites where there are no formal structures to deal with VAW. The absence of such structures can lead to confusion and dissipation of efforts.

As VAW is not mentioned in terms of the outputs/indicators, it would be an appropriate time to articulate the vision, scope and mandate for working on this issue within the parameters of Outcome 2. At present the extent to which the issue gets taken up depends on the inclination of PRADANs team on location, on their experience base, and on their existing workload. As a result, there is a lack of consistency of work in this area. The role of the associative tiers of SHG, Cluster and Federations could also be further clarified with regard to this issue. Discussions on gender-based discrimination and VAW could become a regular part of the agenda rather than being dealt with on a case- by-case basis. While all districts may not wish to initiate such formal interventions (like Nari Adalats) to deal with VAW, the lessons learnt in terms of dealing with cases as part of these interventions and the capacity building inputs that have gone into developing these institutions can be extracted and strategies could be designed to incorporate them as part of the procedures that associative structures take up when dealing with VAW. Given that there are some teams that have done more in-depth work on this issue, other teams could benefit from their experience.

Overall Observations: Output 2.2

Women leaders at all levels of the associative tiers have begun to play a role in supporting women to take up issues of gender based discrimination as well as supporting younger women (who are newer members in newer SHGs) to come out and play football, attend the Mahadhiveshan, take part in the role plays, and become members of theater groups. Many of these women leaders are also trainers, CSPs or CRPs and therefore play a dual role. They have intervened as a group and supported women individually. The reviewers were impressed by cases they heard where SHGs had taken the lead in dealing with them. We have mentioned the case of domestic violence in Purulia above. Another case comes from Koderma, where the SHG women spoke in support of the second wife of a widowed farmer, when she was labeled a witch by the community. The group analysed that the reason for this was the fact that the second wife had not returned the first (deceased) wife's jewelry to her family. This disgruntled family was instrumental in leveling the allegations. Timely intervention interspersed with counseling led to the case being solved (the jewelry was returned and the label of witch was withdrawn). However, there is the danger of concentrating too many roles within a small pool of women. In some of the districts (Koderma for instance) the same woman plays multiple roles: CRP, Nari Adalat member, SHG member, Cluster Leader and Trainer all rolled in one. So though they emerge stronger as a result of more inputs and opportunities, there are fewer women overall in leadership roles. On the other hand, Purulia's strategy of one-woman one-role spreads the opportunities amongst a larger pool of women, but each possibly has fewer skills.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Significant strides have been made in building a basic understanding of gender equality at the level of the organisation (PRADAN) and at the grassroots, where a cadre of field-based resource persons and trainers has been developed. Shifts have been made in terms of incorporating a gender perspective in PRADAN's on-going work, exemplified in the work done to recognize women's contribution in agriculture and developing their identity as farmers.

Though violence against women (VAW) has not been specifically mentioned in this outcome it has emerged as a significant unintended outcome of this programme. The critical step of breaking the silence around VAW is clearly visible and is an important achievement of the project.

Several strategies and activities, including campaigns and other forms of public events, have been used to spread awareness. A range of gender related issues have been taken up by the SHGs. These include understanding and responding to gender-based discriminatory practices like witch hunting, dowry, early marriage; social practices that have a significant negative impact on women like alcoholism; gender biases evident in education, food practices, health (including taboos around menstruation). In locations where PRADAN has used a multi-pronged strategy to address these social issues through trainings, village-level meetings and public events (theater performances or campaigns) a deeper understanding and analysis of gender issues could be seen.

The programme is poised for a deepening of work in this area. The need for a more sustained and systematic programme on the ground that translates conceptual learning from training into concrete action, as well as ‘on the field mentoring’ and hand-holding was articulated.

Given that there are some teams that have done more in-depth work on the issue of VAW the other teams would benefit from them sharing their experiences on this issue.

D.2.3. How effective has the programme been so far in enhancing women’s access, control and enhancement of livelihood opportunities?

This question pertains to Outcome 3 as elaborated below

Table 8: Outcome 3 Its Outputs And Indicators

Outcome/output 3	Indicator
Women SHG members from tribal, dalit and backward communities in endemic poverty pockets of project areas, display enhanced sense of equality as economic actors in the household.	Number of women from marginalised communities who recognise themselves as equal actors in contributing to the economic well-being of the family.
Output 3.1	
Increased awareness of women SHG members in 9 districts in 4 states about constitutional guarantees related to livelihood opportunities.	Number of women from marginalised communities who made efforts to access provisions related to wage labour under MGNREGS.
	Number of women from marginalised communities who made efforts to access her entitlements for livelihood augmentation.
Output 3.2	
Enhanced awareness of women SHG members aboutof new livelihood technologies and skills of using the same.	Number of women from marginalised communities who are skilled at using improved livelihood technologies including resource management.
Output 3.3	
Enhanced confidence and abilities of wWomen SHG members to manage input mobilisation and output disposal of their livelihood activities.	Number of women from marginalised communities who can manage input mobilisation and output disposal of their livelihood activities.

The key observations related to Outcome 3 are as follows:

Shift in Approach (Observations related to output 3)

“Although we have been working on livelihood augmentation and livelihood promotion for a long time, the project has provided an opportunity to look at livelihood from a gender lens. The focus in this outcome has been to build an understanding about women’s contribution, to see them as a

contributors in their individual capacities and not only as links to the family, to look at and promote access and control over resources.” (Core Group member)

This shift in approach symbolizes the change in PRADAN’s work on livelihood augmentation and livelihood promotion in the project locations and is an important contribution of the GEP. Equally crucial are PRADAN’s efforts to take this perspective down to the field level. As a PRADAN executive explained, “This year with the onset of kharif, we were clear about three things – first, women can plan for crops and execute their plans in the field; second, women can independently procure inputs of their choice; and third, they can also control income and yield from the fields they are taking risk for.”

This clarity and shift in approach of PRADAN team can be seen in the above-mentioned examples as a transformation from one of ‘livelihood through microfinance and increase in production for family well-being’ to one of seeing ‘women as knowledgeable, trained decision makers, establishing their identity as farmers and controlling and contributing to income as individuals and not only as family members.’

Enhanced awareness and increase in skills and capacities about livelihood opportunities and techniques

Outreach

As per data provided by PRADAN their outreach in terms of the number of women who have undergone trainings to learn new skills and techniques for livelihood opportunities stands at a total of 25,500 women (as per the FGE Report of December 2012), who are now skilled in using improved livelihood technologies including resource management.

Women Can Learn

Earlier though women SHG members were the basic unit of PRADAN’s work, women themselves were not the focus of trainings. It was the male member of households that received agriculture-related, livelihood-related and other technical trainings. The PRADAN team realised that excluding women from these capacity building and skill trainings reduces their chances of having a say in agriculture or any other livelihood activities as women are seen as being ignorant, with no contribution to make towards improving production.

A total of 1,580 such trainings (as per PRADANs presentation) have been held on gender and livelihoods with women as the main participants. Having these skills in agriculture has broken stereotypes about women’s abilities to understand technical knowledge and has consequently brought about a change in terms of increasing women’s decision making roles both within the household as well as in decisions regarding seeds and fertilizers. This was visible in Balaghat and Purulia, where they are using their newly acquired knowledge to increase agricultural production and hence incomes.

Innovations

The innovation in Purulia district needs a special mention here. Women who have undergone training as part of the farmers school initiative are known as ‘Chasi Sathi’ (Farmer Friend). A total of 664 women have been trained as Chasi Sathis and they have helped 3,400 women farmers to make plans related to their agricultural practices. The agriculture school model is based on a learning cycle that combines technical information with practical demonstration followed by concrete inputs to help women make agricultural plans. The initial learning cycle is followed by a reflection process and

then further inputs are provided. As part of the school's methodology, a demonstration plot is selected and lessons are conducted around this plot. The purpose of the school is not only to train women in new and better agricultural practices but also to establish the identity of the individual woman as a 'farmer' for herself, within the family as well as in the community. The practice of displaying the names of women on the school blackboard as a form of validation is an innovative way for them to gain acceptability from the family and from the community. During the planning process women have made changes from the traditional one-time use of land to two times and also made more informed decisions about better crop choice. In one cluster women conducted hamlet level meetings to bring the community together around the issue of controlled grazing. In the same cluster they made a collective plan for a second crop in a 30-acre patch. 16 clusters out of 65 clusters have celebrated this enhanced stake in agriculture by organizing *Chasi Sathi Sammelan*.

Limitations Of Breaking 'Male Bastions'

Despite several such innovations, the number of active women CSPs as trainers is uneven across the districts. For instance in Balaghat of the 58 Community Organizers 42 are men and 16 are women. By contrast in Koderma these are 60 in number of which 55 are women. In spite of the successful experiment of Chasi Sathis there is a resistance from the team to train women CRPs in this role in Purulia. When questioned on this, the team said that the women did not have the necessary education qualifications and that making such a move (of having more women in these roles) may alienate the men folk. Such issues need to be constantly interrogated by the team.

Awareness on Schemes and Entitlements

Another input provided by the GEP has been to provide women information and training opportunities to enable access to entitlements under MGNREGA. As per the FGE December 2012 Report, 15,392 women have made efforts to access provisions under MGNREGS (this activity has been taken up in only four of the nine districts). Around 13,000 women have made efforts to access entitlements for livelihood augmentation. As per the FGE Report of July 2012, 32% women are now aware on MGNREGS entitlements. Initial steps through mass awareness campaigns using theatre have been undertaken to spread this awareness among SHG women.

A beginning has been made in linking MGNREGS with the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikarn Pariyojana (MKSP) and INRM, a noteworthy convergence strategy which has opened up more livelihood opportunities for women in Madhya Pradesh. For example, in Balaghat district women have not only secured work on farm ponds through MGNREGS but these ponds have also increased the productivity of their land. There has also been the opening up another area i.e. of getting jobs in semi-skilled categories such as 'mate' (site supervisors) in MGNREGS as in Karanjia district (trainings for women to become 'mates' are being planned in Balaghat). Though the number of women who are trained and secured jobs is still small, it is a good start to break gender stereotypes.

However, there is a danger that these innovations and practices will remain as exceptions (or islands of excellence) unless more women and locations demonstrate these. This concern is aptly stated in the FGE Report of July 2012 - "32% of the women are now aware of their entitlements under MGNREGS. But only 21% made efforts to access these entitlements either as wage labourers or for asset creation."

Women's Identity As Equal Actors And Decision Makers

Women's self-identity as workers or farmers will decide their approach to actualizing their role as equal partners in contributing to the economic well-being of the family. The PRADAN team believes

that there has been a gradual shift in mindset to identify and state that even she is the owner of that land. “Just like the man, even the woman is a ‘farmer’- Women even realize the value of their work, and say, *‘bhaiyya to khali naagar chalata hai aur baaki saara kaam to hum ho log karte hai, phir wo us hi ka dabaav deta hai (the men only plough the land all the rest of the work is done by us and yet he uses his ability as the tiller of the land to oppress us)’*.” (PRADAN Executive)

Strategies To Establish Women’s Identity As Farmers

In addition to the farmers’ school in Purulia described above, in other areas too, women have introduced certain innovative agricultural practices that have opened up spaces to establish their identity as farmers. This has occurred at least on small patches of land and especially for vegetable cultivation. Organic farming for vegetable cultivation in Balaghat has shown that women can be in control of all agricultural operations as trained farmers with knowledge of preparing organic pesticides and fertilizers. This has not only given them respectability but has also opened up the door to the market for them. The experiment in Koderma where vegetable cultivation (through machans) or in Hazaribagh (pit cultivation of tomatoes) have helped in augmenting incomes and strengthening their recognition as cultivators. The fact that these practices are effective can be seen by the fact that the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Koderma has adopted this innovation and scaled up the model in the entire district along with monetary and material incentives. This is an excellent example of collaboration between PRADAN and government bodies and efforts for similar collaborations need to be made in other districts as well.

Innovations To Mainstreaming

The critical question is how these innovations and experiments are going to be deepened and spread. For change to be sustainable there is a need to dent the material and ideological base of patriarchy. This requires intervention at many levels, including advocacy. Experimenting on a small plot to help increase the family income may be welcomed by families but this may not result in changing the prevailing gender norm. The FGE Report of July 2012 points out “At present women amongst themselves and to the PRADAN professionals have started identifying cases of good agricultural practices with the name of the ‘woman’ but to an outsider they still take the name of the ‘man’ even though the ‘woman’ might have been involved in most of the field operations.” However the very fact that women are recognizing this fact and are ready to change the situation is a good start.

The Next Phase: *Observations*

While much headway has been made in the arena of agriculture and related livelihood practices, many challenges still remain.

Access To Markets

While we heard examples of women playing a more active role in accessing the market, these were few and mostly discussed in terms of the challenges that women face. In Purulia where the identity of women as farmers is very strong, there is minimal access to markets and banks. This was also linked to issues of mobility, where women reported that they do not venture out of the village and also do not have transport. They reported that men also did not want to give up this role. This shows that more work is needed to establish the woman as a worker and a farmer in her own right in domains directly related to livelihoods but also broader areas concerning women’s empowerment. Maintaining disaggregated data about the numbers of women who are starting to take their produce to the market as they increase their control over the economic gains of their labour will help in

planning and exploring newer avenues. These figures will also allow women to gain a deeper understanding of the value of their labour and can be used to reinforce their identity as economic contributors to the well-being of the family.

Livelihoods For The Poorest

PRADAN may also explore more innovative ways to address the issue of livelihoods for landless families. Current interventions with the landless are around spinning of Tussar thread and poultry (and in some instances goat-rearing). For instance, PRADAN could design specific livelihood activities for the landless that also factor in issues of caste based discrimination vis-à-vis livelihood opportunities if any (for instance, as pump set operators in lift irrigation schemes being implemented for SHG members).

Increased Income Vs. Increased Work Load

A critical analysis through a gender lens will help to identify and address the issue of increasing burden on women as they try to establish themselves as farmers. In Koderma where incomes from vegetable cultivation have certainly given more status to women as economic actors, it has also increased her drudgery as she has to now ferry water from more than three kilometers to water her vegetable patch.

Beyond Planning

To quote the FGE Report of July 2012, “48% of the women were involved in livelihood planning and 80% acted on the plans made. However, only 21% women were reasonably aware of all the linkages related to their livelihood enterprise.” The above data points to the fact that while women have made strides in terms of their involvement in planning and implementation of plans, in comparison the awareness on the other linkages in terms of livelihoods entitlements is not as high. The programme in the coming phase can examine what steps need to be taken to enable women to connect to other related avenues and opportunities for livelihoods.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The programme has enabled PRADAN to engage with livelihood related issues from a gender lens. PRADAN team members and the women they work with have worked towards developing women’s identity as farmers and thereby enabling them to begin making a shift in terms of decision making on economic issues at the household level. By making women the focus of technical trainings the programme has established that women can develop technical expertise. Innovations in the area of livelihoods, such as the farmers’ school in Purulia and organic vegetable farming in Balaghat need to be well-documented and disseminated. Innovations in non-agricultural livelihood options could also be explored given the expertise PRADAN has on livelihoods in general.

D.2.4 How effective has the programme been so far in enhancing the responsiveness of duty bearers and PRI representatives to issues faced?

The question pertains to Outcome 4 as elaborated below

Table 9: Outcome 4, Its Output, And Indicators

Outcome 4	Indicator
Enhanced responsiveness of duty bearers and PRI representatives to issues faced by community.	Enhanced responsiveness by duty bearers and PRI representatives to women's efforts at accessing entitlements.
Output 4.1	
Enhanced engagement of duty bearers with women's collectives on addressing community issues.	Number of status papers prepared by SHG associative tiers on functioning of public services.
	Number of joint meetings of duty bearers and SHG associative tiers on exploration of community issues/problems.
Output 4.2	
Enhanced engagement of PRI representatives with women's collectives on addressing community issues.	Number of joint meetings of PRI representatives and SHG associative tiers on community issues/problems.
	Number of advocacy issues identified for engagement.
	Number of petitions submitted and/or meetings organised to influence systems.

General Observations Related To Outcome 4

At all four locations, the MTR team interviewed duty bearers (Panchayat representatives, police personnel, and district level administrative staff), all of whom knew of PRADAN and its work either through its SHGs activities (Block, Panchayat representatives) or Nari Adalats (at the women's police thana in Koderma).

We heard a number of examples where field teams had proactively engaged with public institutions with positive results. We are pointing out 3 examples that are examples of effective practice.

In Balaghat, the MTR team interviewed the District Magistrate. While he had been in Balaghat for only a few weeks he knew PRADAN, as he had been in Kesla prior to his current posting and was impressed by the organisation's work there. "In Kesla, the Narmada Mahila Sangh (Narmada Women's Collective) brought issues to me from their villages every week, all of which were very genuine. In the Mahadiveshan, they demanded a Vishesh Mahila Jan Sunwai (Special Women's Public Hearing), a space where they could put forward their grievances on a regular basis." Thus, in Kesla the first Mahila Jan Sunwai was held in October 2012. The first Wednesday of every month has been scheduled for this meeting, thereby institutionalizing the process and giving credibility and validity to the work being carried out by the Narmada Mahila Sangh. This is an example of establishing a good public grievance redress mechanism. This would be an excellent initiative to advocate for and replicate .

In Koderma, acknowledging the extent of PRADAN's large network, the District Administration decided to work in partnership with them on a water and sanitation scheme. This was possible due to advocacy efforts made by PRADAN's team and the size of the SHG network, which the administration recognized as being a good conduit to promote their schemes. Here we see an example of collaboration for a development and service delivery purpose. But the team needs to be

careful that women are not only used in instrumental ways but are able to influence the planning and implementation of the scheme in a way that women's practical and strategic needs are furthered.

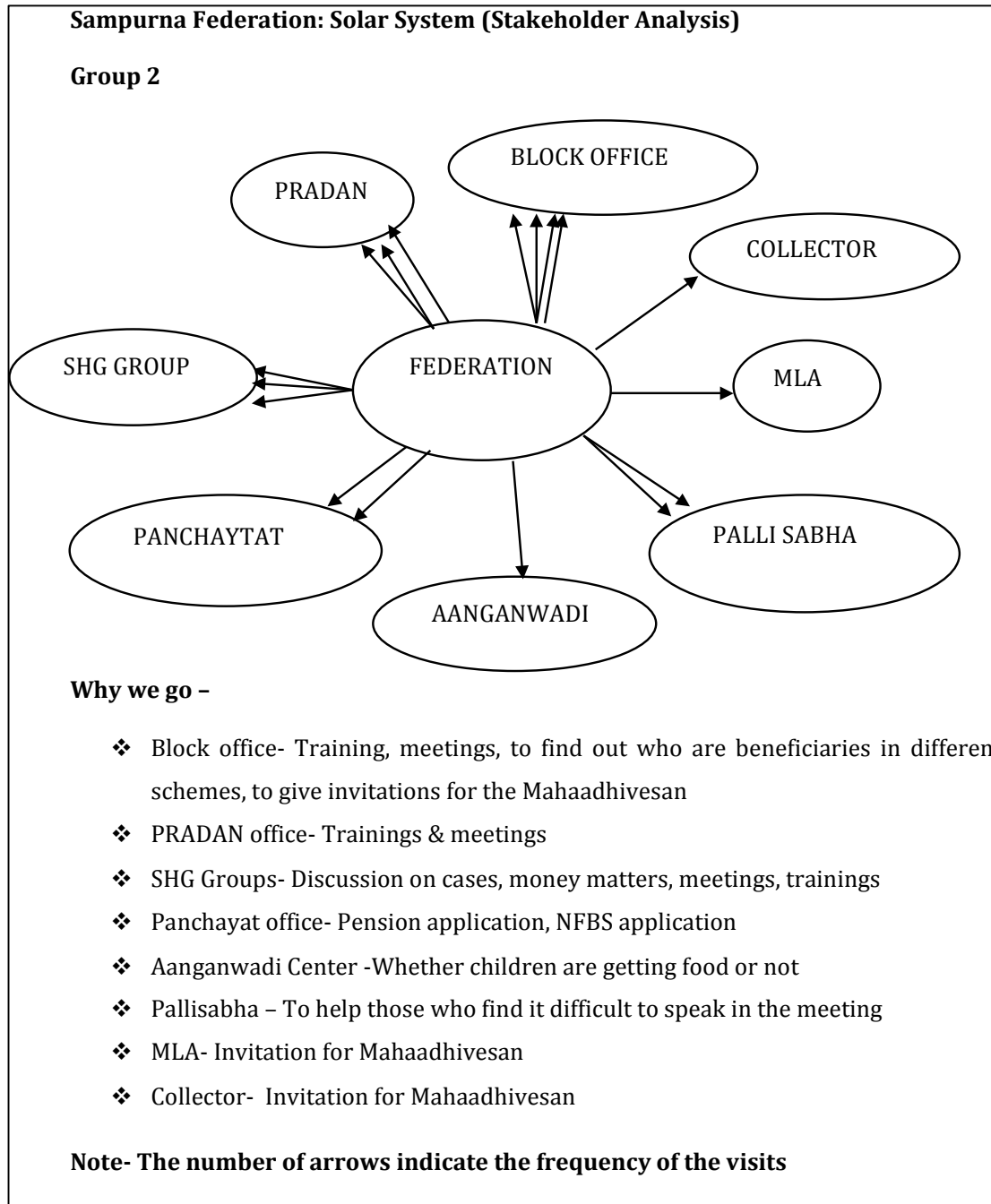
As mentioned earlier in the report, PRADAN's work on violence against women (whether through formal structures such as Nari Adalats in Hazaribagh, Kesla, and Koderma or through informal ways at the SHG/Cluster level in Balaghat and Rayagada) has brought the PRADAN teams into contact with the police. For example, in Koderma, an institutionalized system exists where the police and the Nari Adalat work jointly to resolve cases referred to the women's cell by the Nari Adalat. In the context of VAW work, building a relationship with and influencing the police on gender issues is a good strategy. It also serves to bring recognition to the leadership of the women's collective on issues of violence. The lessons learnt from this collaboration in terms of strategy and process should be shared widely amongst the other teams.

Need For More Strategic Intervention On Influencing PRIs

The MTR carried out interviews with Panchayat representatives as well as a stakeholder identification activity with federation members to elicit the nature, sphere of influence and frequency of interaction between women and different institutions (See Box 1 below). The findings went to show that women's engagement with Panchayats in most locations focused on MGNREGA (for work and late payment of wages) and demand for pensions. None of the responses showed SHG/Cluster/Federation members working closely with the Panchayat as members of the various Panchayat-level bodies or School Management Committees. With regard to other institutions, a few women described 'dropping-in' on the school or the Aanganwadi Center to see to the quality of the food, but there was no deliberate, strategic intervention planned collaboratively between the Panchayat and the associative tiers.

The need for women to engage more strategically (including using spaces and opportunities more proactively) with PRI institutions became evident during an interview with a tribal Sarpanch in Village Dumbisahi, Karanjia district. He spoke about how he had been a CSP with PRADAN in the years before he stood for elections and had a very close relationship with the SHGs in his village. However, he could not recall when SHG women had come to him with an issue. While he recognized and spoke about their participation in Palli Sabhas and in the INRM planning, he had suggestions as to what they could do for the efficient running of the school and against the sale of liquor in the village. In such cases where a good relationship exists, women should be facilitated to leverage it more effectively.

Box 1: Group work carried out by members of the Sampurna Federation in Karanjia vis duty bearers



Joint meetings between associative tiers and duty bearers (Output 4.1. and 4.2)

As was reported to the MTR team (PRADAN presentation 4th April, New Delhi) a total of 86 joint meetings have been held between Duty Bearers and SHG associative tiers on exploring community issues and problems (Dindori, Kesla, Hazaribagh, Rayagada) and 42 joint meetings held between PRI representatives and SHG associative tiers (Kesla, Hazaribagh).

In Balaghat, the team organised a meeting with the police to bring to their attention the difficulties that women's collectives faced while taking up cases of violence. The local thanas (police outposts) were not being cooperative when such cases were being brought to their notice. This beginning has helped the SHG members in the filing of FIRs and the police are providing more support than they have done in the past. Similarly, other instances of such informal efforts include a sensitization workshop with government officials in Dindori and a meeting between the women and local police station in Koderma.

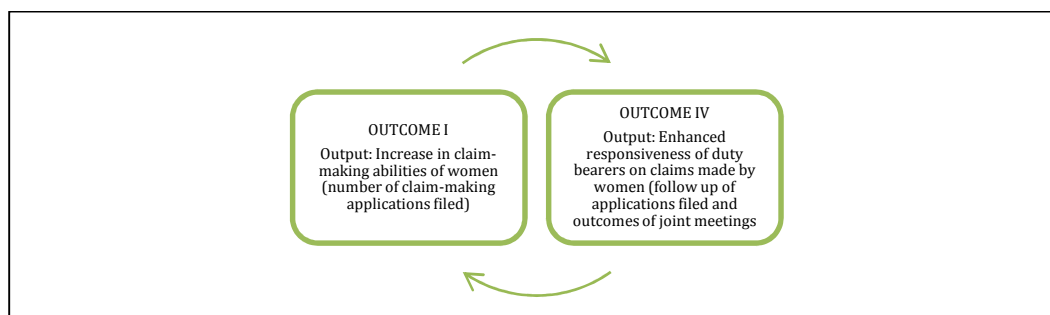
"These interventions, wherever they can be seen, have given confidence to the women and also established their credibility in the eyes of the local administration. In VAW work, there are many players involved – police, special cells, legal aid units, etc. so there is a need for interface between them and the women. We want to make a directory of all these officials' contact details and distribute them to the women so at any instance of violence, they can directly call and ask for help." Team Leader

Response to Output 4.4 can be found in the section pertaining to the advocacy strategy, evaluation questions on 'partnerships.'

An overall reflection on the responsiveness of duty bearers takes us to issues raised later in the report on the monitoring system. However, it needs to be underlined that 'enhanced responsiveness of duty bearers' cannot be measured only through the number of joint meetings held or applications received by the duty bearers alone. Their responsiveness would be measurable through the action they take on the outcomes (or follow up) of such meetings. The change in the attitude to cases of violence in Balaghat post the meeting with the police or the fact that the police has since then indicated that they will invite women from the VLCs to assist in mediation of cases of violence, is a good example where the quality of output becomes immediately evident.

While reporting on the number of meetings, petitions, and applications filed can be part of the reporting on Outcome 1, the follow up on the same could become part of the reporting for Outcome 4 (which shows the responsiveness of duty bearers) thereby completing the process and reporting cycle. In Outcome 1, the data type is in terms of numbers of applications and in Outcome 4, we saw case studies being used as the main form of reporting (see box 2).

Box 2: Relationship between Outcome I and Outcome 4 for reporting purposes



An analysis of the cases where applications were rejected and the underlying reasons for the rejections would yield rich data. Institutions are embedded in relations of gender and identity based power, so it is important to be able to holistically identify the processes, including bottlenecks, of how applications move through the system. Such analysis would generate a more complex understanding of institutional responses, especially from the perspective of marginalized women who have historically been denied access to rights and entitlements. This analysis would also help open up spaces for them to raise their voice against identified discriminations and could be the basis for identifying a collective advocacy issue/strategy at the local or even State level.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Efforts have been made to engage duty bearers with the issues that the members of associative tiers face. There is also evidence that duty bearers are not only aware of PRADAN's work and of the women's groups, but are also collaborating with them in particular instances. From the reports and field visits it was clear that the nature of this engagement varied across sites. Systematised/institutionalized strategies to engage with duty bearers such as Panchayat members could be developed in the next phase. Efforts to track the 'responsiveness' of duty bearers can be made through a system of effective monitoring of the follow-up of claims being made by the women, particularly for their rights and entitlements.

D.2.5 How relevant have the capacity building inputs provided so far been in reaching programme goals, outcomes and outputs and in addressing the needs expressed by PRADAN team and the women themselves? (Question 1.4)

and

How effective have the capacity building inputs been in catalyzing change processes at the level of self and towards collective action?

In this section we will respond to the following questions related to capacity building.

Relevance of capacity building inputs (Question 1.4)

As mentioned earlier [is it section 1.2 a gender needs assessment carried out by Jagori was the basis for designing the capacity building strategy as well the content of the inputs. The MTR team feels that the time spent by Jagori to understand PRADAN at an organisational and programme level was well invested. Besides being able to assess needs it helped build a relationship between the field and technical support team. As of the mid-term point, the capacity building needs have responded to the needs of the PRADAN team and the women. The basic cycle that has been followed by Jagori in the first year has included:

- Establishing partnership and creating a pool of experts
- Gender needs assessment through field visits
- Modules and material development
- Trainings and workshops
- Reviews and planning.

In the second year needs assessments were carried out district-wise during field visits.

Effectiveness of the capacity building inputs

Training Strategy

Jagori designed its training and capacity building strategy based on the above steps, and adopted a cascade approach in order to reach large numbers. In the first phase 58 PRADAN staff members participated in Jagori's basic gender training workshops held in the four states between May and July 2011. The content of the training broadly covered basic concepts related to gender, understanding of power and patriarchies, violence against women, and interfaces between caste, class and gender. Interviews with PRADAN staff members indicated that they found these trainings very effective. They were appreciated by all and were regarded as being 'eye openers' for bringing about fundamental shifts. The effectiveness of the training can also be gauged by the findings described in Outcome 2.

Investing In PRADAN Staff As A First Step

PRADAN executives and anchors are the main pivots that guide this programme's implementation at the field level. They are, therefore, also critical links to ensuring the translation of training content into field level understanding and activities. The MTR field experience showed that the quality, depth, and energy of the programme in different locations was affected by the executives' understanding and commitment to the issue. It was also dependent on their levels of exposure to gender issues, other trainings and overall facilitation skills. As PRADAN staff have geographical responsibilities (i.e. executives implement all projects within a geographical area) it is important that all executives have a good understanding as well as the requisite skills. The MTR team found that there were variations amongst executives with regard to levels of understanding, skill and initiative.

Grounding The Training

The next stage of the cascade was to take this training down to women leaders and community resource persons, which was done through gender trainings and/or through women's leadership development camps. According to figures provided by PRADAN, 2502 women leaders have been trained through these camps and 657 trainers have been trained. For these training activities, training material, modules and other communication material like songs and posters were developed. In locations where trainers have had the benefit of handholding support or mentorship either from Jagori or PRADAN, their skill levels and understanding were good. Having designated resource persons to accompany each team has been a good strategy as it has enabled building trust, long-term stakes and continuity. The Jagori resource pool comprises of senior trainers, experts and activists and they in turn have drawn on other resource persons and organisations to become part of their pool (also described in the section on partnerships).

Examples from participatory activity

The reviewers used a participatory exercise (Gender Wheel) to gauge trainers understanding of gender inequality. In this exercise participants were asked to think of spokes of a bicycle wheel as different manifestations of gender inequality. They were asked to explain these manifestations, where possible, through examples.

Box 3: Manifestations of gender equality through ‘spokes of a wheel’ metaphor in Karanjia

Excerpts from the Gender Wheel Exercise

TOT Participants group in Karanjia: Presentation of Group Work

Spoke 1: Division of work – Gave throwing of stones activity (an activity from their training) as an example and how men traditionally plough the field, but that does not mean women cannot do it.

Spoke 2: Access to Resources – A woman can’t access or have ownership of anything at home and neither can she give anything to anyone as per her wish since nothing belongs to her.

Spoke 3: Value of Work – Women do all the work at home but this has no value: paid or unpaid. The same work if it is done outside the home has a monetary value assigned to it.

Spoke 4: Power – People belonging to a higher caste and class have more power through education and money. The poor and illiterate have no power in hand. Though women can come to a position of power (such as through Panchayat elections), control or power usually goes to her male counterpart.

Spoke 5: Productive & Reproductive work – Bringing in an income is productive work and doing household work is reproductive work.

The reviewers found that the trainers’ recall of training content was strong. Trainers across locations appreciated the methodology and could remember several activities conducted during the training. They were also able to apply their learning to concrete situations. During the Gender Wheel exercise when asked for instances when they had been able to ‘puncture’ the wheel of patriarchy they gave the following examples (1) Opening of bank accounts in women’s names (2) Issuing of MGNREGA job cards in women’s names (3) Prioritizing women’s names as beneficiaries in different schemes during Palli sabhas, and (4) Participating in gender trainings to puncture the power of men.

Limitations of the cascade model

“Model making is easier, implementing it is tougher,” said a Jagori resource person. While the cascade model has enabled a large outreach, issues of quality have surfaced. The quality of trainers the review team interacted with varied significantly in terms of their levels of understanding and articulation skills. A suggested next step would be if Jagori could carry out a further selection from the pool of women trained and identify a group of strong women trainers with whom they can work further. As mentioned earlier in the report, such a process has been followed in Karanjia where initially women were selected for the trainings through a process and after being observed as trainers in the field, a further short listing was carried out. The review team in their interaction with these women found that they had excellent skills and understanding. The review team endorses the strategy of investing further in building the skills of these women – they are from the area, are committed to the programme and will gradually have the potential of playing an advocacy role and playing a resource persons’ role for other programmes (government and non-government) in the area.

The other observation the review team would like to make is that what is being called a ‘training’ with SHG women and which is being provided by women leaders or CSPs/CRPs on issues of discrimination (reported 4158 women reached through 221 events) is more in the nature of an orientation of a few hours. This clearly indicates a dilution of training content. It cannot be expected that after one such input the women will have an understanding of patriarchy. Further, in several locations the trainers conducted these trainings without any mentoring. Trainers’ understanding in many locations is limited to the exercises and issues that they have been through in the trainings themselves (e.g. in Purulia the same four issues have been transmitted at all levels and was repeated in all our interactions in exactly the same way). Trainers articulated that the tools that they could use

directly in the field were still limited. In some locations the trainers were not aware of modules that have been developed to conduct training sessions on gender issues for SHG members.

What Next After Training

Follow-up for the trainers in terms of hand-holding support or mentorship needs to become an integral part of the training strategy both at the levels of the PRADAN team and the CSP/CRPs. At present the process of making the trainers practice their facilitation skills (in terms of the content of their sessions at the SHG level) has not taken place intensively. Across the board, teams expressed a demand for planning (either in terms of the further training inputs or on what interventions they could make at the field level) to be included as part of the training process. While planning has been included as part of the training agenda, the field teams expressed that this is not adequate.

The teams were also looking for more intensive inputs in certain areas like VAW, gender and livelihoods, understanding and working on entitlements from a gender perspective. The next phase of training could, for instance, consider weaving in the content of outcome areas in the main trainings. Practical examples from the programme could be developed into training content as case studies and these spaces be used to discuss knotty issues such as the additional burden of livelihoods interventions on women or the lack of acceptance of women CSPs working on agriculture. Such discussions would help the teams to apply their perspective and information on gender to real life situations. There was a strong demand for such inputs. The challenge facing the technical support team is of reaching large numbers across multiple sites, with its different contextual realities, programmatic focus and team strength.

As the programme has begun adopting a gender equality lens in the project sites, this may be the right time to invest both in a centralized in-house training team from amongst PRADAN staff and to develop training teams of high quality at the district-level simultaneously. Jagori could use their resources – time, energy, experience and skills – to mentor/handhold these (smaller yet select) teams. The scale of work (including contextual and language differences) and pace in a large programme could benefit from the development of such in-house capacities.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The cascade model used for building an understanding of the issue of gender and patriarchy has enabled a large number of staff members of PRADAN to take the training down to the grassroots level. A basic and common understanding on core conceptual issues has been built across the tiers by Jagori, providing a foundation upon which to build in the coming phase. The development of a group of trainers at the level of CRPs and CSPs and community leaders is an important achievement of the programme. However, variations can be found across locations in the understanding and skill levels of this group. Further investments in capacity building for this group are recommended. The emerging needs have been articulated in terms of more in-depth training on gender and greater on-field support and specialised training on location-specific issues. For this the possibility of developing an in-house gender training team for PRADAN could be considered.

D.3. EFFICIENCY

How efficient are the programme's management and MIS systems and are they adequate in ensuring that the programme will reach its targets?

D.3.1 How efficient and responsive are the programme management structures?

Management Structure

The management structure for the programme has primarily involved the setting up of a six-member Core Group within PRADAN specifically for the management of the GEP. The Core Group has one anchor person responsible for guiding and supporting each geographical location or team where the GEP is being implemented. The field teams in turn have each nominated a GEP anchor from amongst them, who is responsible for the reporting and co-ordination of the GEP. The anchor is also responsible at the team level to coordinate with the technical resource team. The MTR team did not find a single team where the team leader was also playing the role of GEP anchor. This fits well within the decentralization principle that is characteristic both of PRADAN as well as of this programme as a whole. The technical resource group for its part has also allocated an anchor for each location. This resource person does not necessarily have the responsibility of carrying out all of the trainings on location but helps the team identify resource persons/organisations as per their specific requirements and needs. A steering group comprising members from Jagori and PRADAN oversees the coordination of the programme. Till recently the programme manager was in-house (PRADAN team member) but since the last year a consultant has been hired specifically to manage and coordinate this programme.

The Core Group and the management team meet with the team leaders and anchors annually for a collective planning and review meeting. There is space for decentralized decision-making by the teams, to shape programmes according to their specific context and pace. Each team coordinates with their core group member, as per their need and requirement and this is a more informal arrangement. The Core Group meets intermittently, as and when possible, dovetailing their meetings with other PRADAN gatherings.

Setting up these structures and putting time into operationalising them, has enabled this project to take off in multiple locations, addressing a variety of issues and engaging with several institutions.

While this structure is performing well now, given the many players and the geographical spread it did take time to get established. "The role of the core team has evolved over a period of time and initially the contact with district teams was limited, then it [the Core group] took a lead in actually supporting the teams as per their needs. Now it is much better, though, there is scope for improvement," reported a Team Leader. Regular and systematized meetings of the teams with their core group members, as well as for the core group as a whole, may lead to the improvement mentioned above.

Where team leaders have changed (all the sites visited had relatively newly appointed team leaders) it has been challenging for a new team leader to understand the programme if s/he has not been involved in the GEP since the inception. The MTR found that the efficiency and responsiveness of the programme was seen to be directly co-relational to the dynamism of the team leader. Where gender rights are on the team leader's agenda, the programme has shown greater depth and the issues emerging through the GEP have been dealt with greater understanding. This difference is not visible

in the reaching of the (quantitative) targets allocated, but is significant in terms of the quality of the interventions being carried out through the project.

This raises another issue related to programme management, which pertains to balancing of time between this project and the demands and style of work in the other PRADAN projects. In the words of one team leader, “Dealing with a case of violence needs as much precision and support as does the construction of a technically sound hapa (pond).” A hapa can be completed within a given time frame, with quantifiable gains that can be derived from its construction. Dealing with a case of domestic violence or rape however does not lead to the same derivative (and quantifiable) results while the time taken and team effort in its management would in all likelihood be more.

The MTR team was told by a Core Group member that the State Level review meetings allocate limited time to discuss this programme in any depth as they have multiple agendas and projects to review. Therefore, at present this forum is not available to the District teams for problem-solving. Another team leader shared that, “Even the interactions with central unit are more or less on meeting compliances, this needs to change to make this initiative more productive.” Given this, there is scope also to change the agenda for the meetings, so that they are not only about ‘reporting in’ but also focus on what the teams will take back with them in order to grow and deepen their work.

Given PRADAN’s decentralized way of functioning when questioned on their role in the next phase, a Core Group member said that the “role of the Core Group would diminish.” However, given the above, the Core Group would need to play a more focused role as each district programme would move into the deepening phase and would need more strategic advice and support.

D.3.2. How efficient and reliable is the MIS system in capturing the range of gender related changes?

We are beginning this section with a series of quotes from the field, which reflect the challenges entailed in developing a Monitoring Information System (MIS) for a complex project of this nature.

“When it comes to mapping the extent of inputs given, the system is fine, when it comes to participation of women in Gram Sabhas and demanding entitlements it also works, but it doesn’t work well when looking at changes in knowledge or changes in attitude and behavior.”

“A proper and user friendly MIS system is needed to capture the changes happening among SHG members.”

“[The existing MIS] does cover the skeleton of the project extensively but the soul still remains uncaptured...”

PRADAN has an efficient and detailed MIS for recording and reporting on savings/ credit/agriculture related livelihood activities and is adept at gathering and compiling quantitative data on a large scale. For this project too, at each location the MTR team found extensive records of quantitative details of trainings, input sessions and play performances (down to the names of men and women who had been present to watch the play being performed and which of them had asked questions). This level of detailing vis-à-vis numbers is impressive.

Data Collection

As far as gathering qualitative data goes the teams are currently following and developing different approaches. Plans are underway in Karanjia and in Purulia to record changes in each individual woman's understanding of, and action on, gender equality. This is being done through complex self-assessment tools developed by the individual teams specifically for the purpose with a booklet having been designed for each SHG Member. Each team also collects interesting case studies. These are collected by team members, either gathered verbatim at the time of SHG/Cluster/Federation level meetings or through diaries maintained by the community mobilisers (for instance in Balaghat).

Challenges

Using different approaches across locations enables the programme to respond to contextual specificities but makes the consolidation of data difficult. The programme would benefit from consistency across locations on interpretation of indicators and collection methods. Take for instance the reporting on number of cases of violence against women. One location reports that they have intervened in a case of violence if a woman has mentioned it in the SHG/cluster level meeting and members have got together and approached her husband to stop beating her (Balaghat team). Another team would report a case of violence only if a case has been registered with their Nari Adalat (Koderma team) and data of cases dealt with at the cluster level are not presented. There is a substantive difference in level of intervention being carried out on location. Working together to arrive at a common understanding on how both sets of interventions can be differentiated yet reported on within a common MIS would be useful.

The Next Phase: *Observations*

The GEP is working towards putting in place an MIS system that can reflect the qualitative changes that are taking place through the project. For this, a set of simple qualitative indicators that cover both outcomes and processes with reference to the various outcomes needs to be spelt out. These can be tracked periodically through methods such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), FGDs, and individual interviews and can be applied uniformly across locations. These indicators could be to identify changes at the levels of SHGs, clusters/VLC and the Block-level Federations rather than attempting to monitor changes in individuals. This would be more efficient than tracking 20,000 women (approximately) individually as is currently being attempted in the two locations.

The indicators identified in the final PME framework are quantitative and are restricted to numbers. The need to track the qualitative dimensions of these numbers is important in order to shape further implementation and advocacy strategies. There is a need to standardize indicators related to the achievement of results based on the number of applications filed. As mentioned in the response to the evaluation question for Effectiveness (2.4) the current system of reporting also does not allow for an analysis of which types of applications are not moving, an analysis of which can lead to collective advocacy strategies. "We have a very efficient system of following up on agricultural inputs: from the date of transplantation of rice, to the number of times weeding was carried out or fertilizer/pesticides applied. This rigor is missing when it comes to following up on applications filed in the rights and entitlement indicator for instance," reported an anchor. As the team leader from the same team expressed, "(We) need more columns to capture the actualization of demands. What has been actualized in the last 2-3 months? Data can be captured for reporting and other purposes, but we want to facilitate discussions on success/failure stories. The data should trigger a development process – motivate the people, make them realize their achievements and shortcomings, etc. Thereby capturing the entire process, and be not just problem specific." Teams reported that there is a move at the level of PRADAN to review the MIS system and this could be an opportunity not only to develop indicators that capture processes that underlie the outcomes but which could strengthen the programme as a whole.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The programme management structure is functioning smoothly and responds to the complexities of the programme. The support being offered to the team at the level of the Core Group is essential and can be made more systematic and regular. There could be more time allocated in existing planning and review spaces (State and National level) to solve problems across project sites.

The programme maintains extensive records of quantitative details of trainings, input sessions, participation in events etc. At present there are no systems to similarly gather or maintain qualitative data across locations. The need to gather robust qualitative data both to reflect the programme's achievements as well as to plan for further programme and advocacy strategies was expressed. A set of simple qualitative indicators and tools to gather the information corresponding to the outputs would be extremely useful at this stage of the programme.

D.4. SUSTAINABILITY

Is the programme moving towards ensuring that change processes taking place at different levels will be sustained after the programme concludes?⁴

4.1 What strategies are being or can be developed to sustain individual changes amongst staff, women and institutions (including SHGs and federations) beyond the programme period?

At The Level Of PRADAN Staff

Sustaining individual change: Individuals across teams and posts spoke about ways in which the trainings led to changes that went beyond the mandate of this specific project. Several such stories of personal change were shared during the field visits and have also been documented in the FGE Monitoring Reports. However, for these stories of change to be sustained, institutional spaces need to be created, nurtured, and allowed to take root. Regular forums for reflection and dialogue are a good strategy as was reported by the Kesla Team. The team holds weekly meetings “to share our own experiences and about the hindering forces to deal with such issues, the staff share and support and understand each other. We identify different topics (gender violence, gender budget, masculinity, society and patriarchy) to read and write about, which help us to dive to the depth of the issue...we also spend time with individuals discussing issues arising in the field and in their personal lives.” Such spaces are important as they recognise that the engendering process needs more than just technical learning. Time needs to be slotted into the agenda of team meetings to give space to share, learn from, and reflect on one another’s journeys. Given the workload at the field level, making the time is difficult but it needs to be mandated, as we saw in the above example.

Organisational Level

The most significant shift however that has taken place as a result of the GEP is in the organisation’s policy. “The core of the vision statement shifted from family to women during our annual plan (2012-13), this is one of the happiest moments for the team because that statement changed our approach,” said an Anchor who was interviewed by the MTR team. This was further corroborated in the interview with the Director of PRADAN who reiterated that through this programme and partnership with Jagori there had been a shift in the approach of the organisation, which has been incorporated into PRADAN’s organisational strategic plan. He said that they were exploring possibilities for funding support to spread the programme to more districts than the current nine. Besides the shift in the organisational mandate, institutional change is occurring in an organic manner as well. This is illustrated in this statement made by a team leader, when asked to share his ‘aha’ moment vis-à-vis this project said, “When the other teams who are not participating in the project started taking interest in the project activities. They also wanted to initiate the work and were informally asking about the work, the training modules and their impact at length.” The organisation is committed to sustaining the gains of this project and has already taken steps to initiate this.

⁴ The second question (4.2) related to advocacy as per the original evaluation questions has been addressed as part of the advocacy question in the Partnerships section

Sustaining Changes Amongst The Women And Women's Institutions

As mentioned earlier there are several instances where the women members individually and collectively have fought against various forms of gender inequality. The first step towards sustainability is for SHG members at the different tiers to 'own' the agenda. This was explained through an example from Dindori, where SHG members began questioning the Fair Price Shop agent about quantity and rates and compelled him to give the right amount of grain at the right price. This gave the women, "an operational insight of designing and following up an activity in such a way that it lead to a logical end. Once the women understand that this new approach brings with it social and political power which only enhances the steps they have taken to improve their economic status through the agricultural and savings and credit activities carried out before, there shall be no looking back."

The focus then has to be for the associative tiers to take on this agenda and ensure that the case shared above is not a one-off example. "We visualize that this whole journey will generate a confidence in the women's collectives and gradually, after having concrete experiences of working on various issues of discrimination, they will be in a position to take it forward." The steps needed to institutionalize this agenda still need to be worked upon as the focus till now has been on perspective and capacity building and enabling women to act.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Individual team members and the organization as a whole have made significant shifts in their approach. The organisation's approach to gender is being institutionalized in its new strategic plan. At the field level there is recognition that change will be sustainable if women take charge of the agenda. For this, clear-cut steps need to be designed in the next phase as the present phase has focused on building capacities and spreading awareness to work on gender related issues.

D.5. PARTNERSHIPS

What initial lessons can be learnt from the partnership arrangement of this programme, where organisations with different strengths and expertise are working together on a women's economic and political empowerment programme?⁵

D.5.1 What are the strengths and challenges of the partnership between the implementing and technical partner?

“PRADAN is not an activist organisation, Jagori is an activist organisation.” (Jagori Team Member).

The biggest strength of this partnership can be seen as the coming together of these two very different organisations, working towards a common goal with commitment. A PRADAN team leader aptly said, “What I consider the strength of this partnership is that both are committed and passionate for the cause.” The differences in approach, skill-sets, and scale of work have possibly ensured that the partnership has been dynamic and shows every potential for the development of a long-term engagement even for the future.

Right from the start, both PRADAN and Jagori looked at the GEP as an opportunity for mutual learning. PRADAN saw the partnership as a way to orient itself, its programmes and its team to the issue of gender and patriarchy. For Jagori this was an opportunity to work on a large scale. Undeterred by its small team and lack of full time staff, Jagori drew together a team of qualified and experienced professionals from across the country to be members of the resource pool available to PRADAN.⁶ Several Team Leaders spoke positively about the nature of support they have received from Jagori. The commitment that Jagori brings to the GEP is evident from its involvement in the project, which is beyond that of a mere ‘technical resource partner.’

As mentioned earlier in the report, the two partners have worked out a complex strategy for implementation which has worked well and has helped in easing communications and building a relationship between the two organisations. In cases where language has been a barrier, Jagori has mobilized local resource teams to step in and provide effective support, such as in Orissa. Thus, they have made it possible to conduct the training in the local language, enhancing the effectiveness of the trainings. At the time of the review both Jagori and PRADAN were collaborating on the production of a series of resource material on gender, MGNREGA, other social security schemes to be translated into local languages that would be available to the trainers.

However, as with any partnership, this one too took some time to ‘take off’. It took a while for the two organisations to synchronize their ways of working. Jagori thought the Core Team would play a more proactive role when it came to the follow-up of the trainings. There was some confusion among PRADAN team members as well. “Honestly, though we submitted the project together, the partnership developed over time. Initially there were ‘disturbances’. People did not like the trainings.

⁵ As the question on short-term impact has been addressed as part of the effectiveness question, the numbering of questions (with reference to the original evaluation questions has changed).

⁶ Jagori is the ‘technical resource partner’ and as per the project document, “It (Jagori) will bring in expertise from various women’s groups in the country and facilitate joint learning sessions with the community. Jagori’s major intervention will be around training of project staff of the partners i.e. PRADAN and Government staff in the field; training of community leaders on issues of political empowerment, and developing resource material for staff and the community. Also, JAGORI will help develop content for the publications, manuals and other resource material.

The results were not that effective. But we also realised that evaluating every event is not that useful. But now having travelled the distance together there is greater coherence. Now there is mutual appreciation in most teams,” explained a senior member of PRADAN. As is to be expected in a project of this size and scale, the balancing of time and project needs between the two organisations has been, and continues to be, difficult at times. This is true both of resource persons individually contracted by Jagori as well as the organisations that are providing support to specific locations/teams.

The challenges of working on gender are never resolved and continuously resurface, requiring on-going engagement. Jagori’s inputs have resulted in enthusiastic, newly trained teams with recently gained perspectives on gender and patriarchy taking new messages out to SHG members. This is leading to situations on the ground that the PRADAN team is finding it is not fully equipped to deal with. A PRADAN team leader narrated, “There is a difference in dealing with some difficult-to-digest messages like women’s right over property. We want to give those messages, but how to do that without putting men on the defensive? We at PRADAN believe that people don’t knowingly do any wrong. They operate from their belief system, so we need one-to-one interaction with them to get across our message, rather than direct confrontation. These interventions cannot happen through a single training.” The teams are now looking to Jagori to provide them with the required “accompaniment” or “hand-holding” support (as variously expressed by the various levels of PRADAN team members interviewed and in Jagori’s Review reports of December 2012). “We need Jagori now not just for inputs and training programmes but to provide us with accompaniment. For instance they need to help us think through how to make frameworks for assessing changes in a woman’s self-view, and in her level of understanding. How do we see if we are moving or not in the right direction? Maybe this could be done by conducting meetings together, analyzing what is going on in the field. They have to show us the way to connect with the larger women’s movement!” said a Team Leader at PRADAN.

D.5.2 How has the partnership been useful in furthering common advocacy agendas and facilitating new relationships?

Jagori has facilitated PRADAN’s participation in larger events both national and international. The One Billion Rising Campaign is an example of how Jagori enabled PRADAN to connect with a worldwide campaign to end violence against women. As mentioned earlier, Jagori has been instrumental in facilitating new relationships between PRADAN and other individual organisations. NAWO has worked with the teams in Orissa to conduct trainings on gender and patriarchy in the local language; SUTRA was called in to build the team’s understanding on PRIs in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand respectively and MARG was brought in to carry out legal literacy trainings for members of the Nari Adalats.

As was mentioned by all the partners a systematic advocacy agenda is yet to be chalked out and will be the focus of the next phase of work. The MTR team therefore looked at advocacy in this context. However, the partners have responded to opportunities that have come up. An example of this is when the PRADAN team was invited to share their experiences of the GEP during a gender sensitisation training programme for the NRLM central unit staff being conducted by Jagori (the training was organized by the third partner in this project, UN Women). The team was informed that discussions are on with NRLM for PRADAN to play the resource organisation function.

With two years of intensive capacity building with the PRADAN team, its CRPs and women leaders, a strong foundation has been laid. . As mentioned earlier in the report, teams are now ready for the next level. There is a need for more frequent and specialised theme-based inputs based on the needs arising from the local teams, where a team leader suggested, “it can be explored whether to widen the panel of technical partners in other thematic areas.” Given this shift in needs, the partners will need to work out strategies with each team based on an analysis of emerging trends from the

groups as well as the demands of the team and continue to provide strategic links to organisations and/or individuals that can provide said support.

D.5.3 How has PRADAN's partnership with Government entities at district and state levels worked so far and how can they be strengthened?

Years of work on the ground has led to PRADAN building a positive relationship with the administration and many of their programmes are inter-woven with government programmes, some at the district level and others at the state level. With the GEP these interventions have benefited by the new gender perspective. For instance PRADAN participated in the designing of a gender module for the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) in Madhya Pradesh; a Water and Sanitation programme, which is being implemented with the District government and UNICEF in Hazaribagh has enlisted the participation of SHG members to bring a gender perspective to the Village Water Sanitation Committee. In Koderma the KVK has adopted and scaled-up the machan model of vegetable cultivation, providing an incentive of Rs.1200/- and nets to promote the practice amongst women. (Other examples are in the section on Effectiveness).

D.5.4. What advocacy strategies have been undertaken and can be considered in the next phase to initiate policy level changes?

While it was envisaged in the design of the programme that advocacy will be carried out in the last two years of the GEP, it is evident from the previous section that advocacy work cannot be compartmentalized into phases and localized advocacy activities have been carried out by each team based on their understanding and abilities. The teams' advocacy strategies with Government entities vary from district to district and team to team. These relationships differ from person-to-person and are not reflective of a longer term strategy. "Locally the women have been doing it. It is just that it has not been institutionalized," explained a UN Women team member. A team anchor identified two areas where the team has gained experience in advocacy:- *"human trafficking in the area and eradication of liquor selling from some villages."*

Meanwhile during the project period, PRADAN has provided inputs into the 12th Five Year Plan. A sharing of the GEP model with NRLM (as mentioned earlier) and with NMEW and the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) was undertaken.

However, the lack of a cohesive strategy or consistent efforts for advocacy at the national, state and district level was reported and felt by all rungs of PRADAN team. There is an enthusiasm to undertake local level advocacy (district and sub district levels). Capacity building for PRADAN team members on advocacy has been identified as a need. The Mahadiveshans could emerge as a potentially powerful space for undertaking advocacy as the local administration and elected members attend the event. For the coming two years, local advocacy strategies/plans need to be drawn up for each district. These could simultaneously aim at influencing the local, and where possible, state-level machinery. There is also at this point in time both the scope and the readiness for determining a joint action plan for Jagori and PRADAN – this could be done through the presentation of a new model for women's empowerment through SHGs, as was done during the NRLM training.

D.5.5 How has the partnership between the programme partners (implementing and technical) and UN Women worked so far, and how can it be strengthened?

The partnership between the Implementing partner and UN Women has been effective. There is no official relationship between the technical resource organisation and UN Women, however, Jagori has been present in all strategic review and planning meetings (even when organised by UN Women) and in their turn have invited UN Women to be present in all their review and planning

sessions. This is indicative of a good working relationship between the three organisations. An illustration of this collaboration is the 'PRADAN, Jagori & UN Women FGE' Facebook page, a resource for sharing information and updates in real time which is an effective use of this new media platform, given the number of geographical locations and the mean age of PRADAN team members.

In terms of the future, one possibility articulated by UN Women and Pradan is for UN Women to play a more proactive role in facilitating advocacy efforts for PRADAN, particularly at the national level, once these have been jointly identified. Plans for cross-share learning from this project with other governance projects being implemented by UN Women has also been identified as a need which is yet to be realised.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

One of the strengths of this programme is the partnership between two different organisations with different areas of expertise working towards a common goal with commitment. Jagori through its network has brought on board a number of senior gender experts, other resource organisations, and enabled PRADAN to connect with global initiatives like One Billion Rising, which has added dynamism to the programme.

The partnership between UN Women, PRADAN and Jagori has also been mutually rewarding. An illustration of this collaboration is the PRADAN, Jagori, and UN Women FGE Facebook page, a resource for sharing information. UN Women could play a more proactive role in advocacy and facilitating learning exchanges from this project with other governance projects being implemented by UN Women.