

TRANSFORMING HUMAN CONDITION

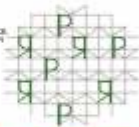
The **New** Rural

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017



प्रदान
Pradan

PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE
FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTION



At a Glance

PRADAN'S INCEPTION 1983

PRADAN'S FOUNDING PRINCIPLE

Well-educated youth, with empathy for others, must work at the grassroots to usher in social change.

PRADAN'S MISSION

Build robust collectives of women that will strive for large-scale change in human condition.

PEOPLE AND GEOGRAPHIES REACHED

Socio-economic profile: ~70 percent of the individuals we work with belong to *dalit* (backward classes) and tribal families, recognized constitutionally as scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs), in rural India.

Individuals: Three million

States: Seven (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and West Bengal)

Households (direct reach): 588,829 (22 percent growth over last year)

Districts: 37 (are among the poorest 150 districts in the country)

Revenue villages: 7,434

Number of habitations /hamlets: 19,811

No. of villages with > 50 percent household coverage: 4,201

Administrative blocks: 117

Women's self-help groups: 46,416

Village organizations: 3,685

Federations of self-help groups: 90

Business/producers' organizations: 99

PRADAN's professionals working at the grassroots: 372

Development apprentices: 172 post-graduates and graduates with technical degrees were recruited and groomed to be development professionals in villages.

PARTNERS

• Trusts/Foundations and Multilaterals: 26

• Corporates: 11

• Government Departments (Central and State): 25

• Research Institutes: 4

• Civil Society Organizations: 65

BUDGET

INR 938 million

RECOGNITION

PRADAN is the proud winner of the Process Excellence Award 2016 instituted by Axis Bank Foundation for creating positive change at the grassroots of rural India.

PRADAN is one of the few social sector organizations in India to be nominated by the Government of India to assist the country's flagship National Rural Livelihoods Mission as a National Support Organization (NSO). PRADAN has been serving as NSO since 2013 and this engagement was renewed this year for another three years.

All program figures, charts and tables indicate numbers as of 31 March 2017. The terms 'household' and 'families' are interchangeably used.

Areas of Operation

PRADAN has organized its grassroots operations into development clusters (DCs). Each DC has smaller teams of professionals dedicated to it who are supported by PRADAN's corporate circle at all levels.

A DC is a region; a collection of districts, which developmentally can be considered a unit for our social transformation mission. The clustering is done to group people and villages that have a shared history, similar socio-cultural profiles, agro-climatic and institutional landscapes. In such a region

'there is connectedness among the community', which allows development efforts to multiply and accelerate.

The corporate circle integrates the entire sphere of organizational engagement internally as well as externally for efficiency and effectiveness. It provides support services organization-wide, internal and external communication, and is responsible for establishing institutional prominence and relevance by influencing policies and practices in the development sector.



Reimagining India's Villages

Transformation in the countryside is not about programs alone; it needs us to envision our villages differently

2016 was a watershed year for those concerned about poverty and inequality. It was the year of transition from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Building on the achievements of the MDGs, which concentrated global attention on poverty, hunger, unmet schooling, gender inequality, disease, and environmental degradation, the SDGs go further, envisioning the process of development to be more inclusive, bottom-up, and holistic.

The emphasis is less on the goals per se, and more on the processes adopted to achieve them so the end results are sustainable and equitable. Dr. Jeffery Sachs, Special Adviser to the UN on MDGs, in his inception note to the SDGs writes "...pathways to sustainable development will not be identified through a top-down approach..." He asserts, "(the achievement of) the three bottom lines (economic development, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion) will depend on a fourth condition: good governance at all levels, local, national, regional, and global."

This focus to build and nurture local institutions of good, representative governance at all levels has emboldened us to push forth with our mission: the mission of empowering community-led institutions to spearhead their own transformation.

If there is a country best suited to attaining sustainable development through inclusive, bottom-up approaches that are led by strong

community institutions of governance it is, undoubtedly, India. In spite of the note-ban blues, the Indian economy has continued to grow at a healthy seven percent per annum, making it the fastest among the big economies of the world.

The economy has grown on the strength of a domestic economy that boasts a large number of billionaires and a burgeoning middle class. But the happy story ends right around here. Oxfam International's *Global Income Inequality Report 2017* ranks India as one of the most unequal countries in the world, with just one percent of the people owning more than half the country's wealth. And it shows that the gap is widening at a quick pace.

A third of the world's malnourished children live in India. Forty four percent of children under the age of five are underweight. Seventy two percent of infants and 52 percent of married women have anemia, and only a third of our girl children complete 10 years of school education.

Even though development programs in the country have, of late, shifted towards legislative guarantees—for employment, education, food—the task of enabling the poor to claim these entitlements has hardly been pursued with seriousness. At best, these schemes remain doles, a continuation of the erstwhile patronage system.

In this already abysmal scenario, the status of the most disadvantaged sections—the small and marginal farmers, the landless, scheduled tribes, *dalits*, women and so on—is even more disheartening and calls

PRADAN envisages women's collectives as leading the process of change in their communities by challenging patriarchal structures, altering power relationships, and triggering processes of change in social, political and economic arenas

for immediate affirmative action. Rural areas today are stranded. They face continued human and material deprivations and a stagnant economy. And the rural-urban divide has never been so stark.

How do we help nearly half the population of our country conquer this mammoth challenge of marginalization and misery?

Transformation in the countryside is not about programs alone; it needs us to envision our villages differently. As places we are proud of and grateful to, not as statistics of distress. PRADAN envisages The New Rural as a thriving place where everyone (especially women and other marginalized communities) lives and works with dignity. Where individuals have access to quality livelihoods, basic services, space for self-expression, networks, security and opportunities to pursue one's own purpose in life regardless of where they live or who they were born to.

Core to this purpose are collectives of rural women who are the forerunners of the transformative process. PRADAN envisages

women's collectives as leading the process of change in their communities by challenging patriarchal structures, altering power relationships, and triggering processes of change in social, political and economic arenas.

For a diverse and dispersed country such as ours, development approaches and processes to combat inequity cannot be the same across all regions. We have, therefore, developed the concept of a Development Cluster (DC). A development cluster, irrespective of revenue boundaries, converges (for our operations) contiguous geographies facing endemic poverty. Each cluster has agro-climatic and socio-cultural similarities that enables contextual and need-based solutions to be planned and executed. The development cluster is PRADAN's arena for catalyzing all-round change through partnerships with concerned stakeholders responsible for its development.

Across all development clusters our teams have been engaging with existing community groups to build excitement and a shared vision for an all-encompassing transformation.

To strengthen impact, we are proactively partnering with state departments, Panchayati Raj institutions, market players and other civil society organizations because large-scale change can only be brought about through alliances enriched with each partner's unique competency.

We are grateful to our friends and partners who have been with us in our journey of 34 years. They challenged us, guided us and ensured we remain an institution of excellence doing what we do best – working with women's collectives to transform human condition. We also welcome new partners who are joining hands with us in different ways and choosing to take the road less travelled.

Rotating the top leadership every five years is a unique PRADAN tradition. It helps reinforce our cherished values of collective action and shared responsibility. This year concluded the term in office of our seventh Executive Director, and the organization chose a new Executive Director.

As the new year dawns, I see the task of transforming the countryside—of making our society, polity and economy more equitable—as one that needs solidarity and coordinated action of all well-meaning forces. Coalitions and partnerships are the need of the day if The New Rural is to be born. We seek to begin a process in which community collectives, CSOs, state departments, corporate organizations, donor systems, academia, and Panchayati Raj institutions come together, imagine a just and equitable India and go about making it happen, village by village. For PRADAN it will be a privilege to play any role in such an orchestration.



Narendranath Damodaran
Executive Director, PRADAN

We are grateful to our friends and partners who have ensured we remain an institution of excellence doing what we do best – working with women's collectives to transform human condition



GOVERNING BOARD

PRADAN

Ms. Anshu Vaish

Chairperson

Anshu is a retired IAS officer of the Government of India. She was Secretary, School Education and Literacy. She has been an independent director at Steel Authority of India Limited since November 2015. She lives in Bhopal with her family.

Ms. Sushma Iyengar

Vice-Chairperson

Sushma founded and led the Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, one of the early rural women's organizations in India. She has initiated many civil society organizations and networks. She was a member of the National Advisory Committee and many steering committees of the Planning Commission. She is currently on the Board of Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation. In 2007 she was selected as one of the Indian Heroes of the year for Public Service by CNN-IBN. She has a Masters in Literature from MS University, Baroda and has studied Master of Professional Studies, Development Studies and Communication from Cornell University, U.S.A. She is based at Old Madhapar in Kutch district.

Mr. Pramath Raj Sinha

Member

Pramath is the founding Dean of the Indian School of Business, and the Founder and Trustee of Ashoka University, and Vedica Scholars. He was Managing Director and CEO of the ABP Group, one of India's leading and most diversified media conglomerates. He worked as a Partner at McKinsey & Company for 12 years. He has an M.S.E. and Ph.D. degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics from the University of Pennsylvania. He lives in New Delhi with his family.

Ms. Mirai Chatterjee

Member

Mirai is currently Director of Social Security at Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA). She is also Chairperson of the SEWA Cooperative Federation and the National Insurance VimoSEWA Cooperative. She was appointed a member of the National Advisory Council in June 2010. She has a B.A. from Harvard University in History and Science and a Masters from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She lives in Ahmedabad with her family.

"There is no spoon-feeding and none is expected."

I met several self-help group members associated with PRADAN at Khunti, Jharkhand. They were all women fighting their battles in life – to make a living, overcome deprivation and better their condition. Yet, the gathering exuded vibrancy and positive energy. They were confident of their capacity to demand their due and optimistic about change. The sense of partnership between the women and the PRADANites was particularly refreshing. PRADAN's role was clear to all: long-term support with a focus on building the strengths of the self-help group members. There was no spoon-feeding and none expected.

- Anshu Vaish

Mr. Biswajit Sen*Member*

Biswajit retired as Senior Rural Development Specialist with the World Bank. He has worked with UNICEF, MacArthur Foundation USA and Swiss Development Cooperation. Currently he is a visiting scholar at the Indian Institute of Management, Udaipur. He was one of the initial team members of PRADAN who went on to set up several other rural development organizations such as GDS, Nalanda and IIMPACT. He has a management degree from Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. He lives in Jaipur with his family.

"Such cheer and motivation in spite of difficulties"

I was very moved and inspired by what I saw. The difficult conditions under which our colleagues live and work in...so cheerfully and with so much motivation. Congratulations to all colleagues. They have my deepest appreciation.

- **Mirai Chatterjee**

"Remarkable and inspiring"

PRADAN's work on the ground shows amazing impact. To see women in remote, tribal areas in Jharkhand leading a life that is self-sustaining for themselves and their families is remarkable and inspiring. And it is equally inspiring to see the commitment and sense of purpose of the PRADAN teams working in these challenging geographies.

- **Pramath Raj Sinha**

Mr. Sanjay Upadhyay*Member*

Sanjay is an advocate at the Supreme Court of India. He is also the founder and Managing Director of India's first environmental law firm, the Enviro Legal Defence Firm. He was an India Visiting Fellow at the Boalt Hall School of Law, University of California, Berkeley, Global Fellow at Duke Marine Lab, Duke University, USA and a legal intern to the Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund, San Francisco. He lives in New Delhi with his family.

Mr. Saroj Kumar Mahapatra*Staff Member*

Saroj has been with PRADAN since 1995. He has an M. Tech. in Civil Engineering from University College of Engineering, Burla, Odisha. His spouse is also a senior member of PRADAN. They live in Raipur with their son.

Ms. Smita Mohanty*Staff Member*

Smita has been with PRADAN since 1997. She was earlier with Oil Orissa, a subsidiary of NDDDB. She has a PGDM from Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar. She lives in Ghaziabad with her family.

Mr. Narendranath Damodaran*Ex-officio Member-Secretary and Executive Director*

Narendranath has been with PRADAN since 1989. He has served in many senior management positions, including leading the embedded cell with the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). He received a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Kerala University and a PGDRM from the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA). He lives in New Delhi with his spouse and daughter.

GOVERNING BOARD

PRADAN Global

PRADAN Global was established to accelerate the organization's impact in India and grow its influence in the development sector to seek more partners in the quest to transform India's countryside.

In 2017, we established a board of advisers in the United States to oversee our 501(c) 3 operations, and to drive technical and financial resources to our teams in India to support innovation, up-scale programs and expand organizational capacity in research, communications, and advocacy.

Dr. Melissa D. Ho

President and Treasurer

Melissa is Managing Director, Africa, at the Millennium Challenge Corporation and has previously held positions at USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. She lives with her family in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Deep Joshi

Vice President

Deep is the co-founder of PRADAN in India. He served as the organization's Executive Director for two terms that concluded in 2007. As a social worker and NGO activist, he is recognized for his leadership in bringing professionalism to the NGO movement in India. He received the Magsaysay Award in 2009 and the Padma Shri Award from the Indian government in 2010. He was educated at MNNIT Allahabad, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He lives in Gurugram, Haryana.

Ms. Laura Birx

Secretary

Laura is a Senior Program Officer at Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. She has worked with USAID managing global nutrition programs and developing the nutrition framework under Feed the Future and the Global Health Initiative. Laura lives in Seattle with her husband.

Ms. Kavita Ramdas

Advisor

Kavita is a leading expert on gender, economic inclusion, and human rights; and she advises organizations around the world on how to optimize their impact. She has held senior leadership positions at the Ford Foundation, Stanford University, and The Global Fund for Women. She lives in New York.

Mr. Robert De Jongh

Advisor

Robert is a Specialist Leader, Emerging Markets at Deloitte Consulting LLP's Monitor Deloitte service line, focusing on impact investing, inclusive growth, and redefining value in underserved markets. He is a thought leader on inclusive business, scaling social innovation, and corporate intrapreneurship. He lives in Washington, D.C. with his family.

Ms. Soledad Prillaman

Advisor

Soledad recently completed a Ph.D. and focuses her research on comparative political economy, economic development, gender, and the politics of the welfare state, with a regional focus in India. In 2017 she joined the faculty of Stanford University and will spend the next two years there as a visiting scholar at Oxford.

Mr. Narendranath Damodaran

Advisor

Narendranath is the Executive Director of PRADAN. He joined the organization in 1989 and has served in many senior management positions, including leading the embedded cell with the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). He received a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Kerala University and a PGDRM from the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA). He lives in New Delhi with his spouse and daughter.

"PRADAN understands that transformational change is born from people themselves; people who are given the tools and collective support to overcome the social and economic barriers that cause poverty to persist. PRADAN's mission, the evidence from its work in the villages, and insights can serve as an example to like-minded organizations around the world."

Julia Lowe

Director

PRADAN Global

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Building the New Rural


The Year That Was

Nearly half of the country's poorest live in six of India's 29 states. Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal are home to 45 percent of the country's economically and socially marginalized people. Poverty is markedly higher among scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs); these two groups together constitute 44 percent of the rural poor¹.

While human development indicators of child and maternal health, availability of healthcare services and quality of primary education are below the national average in these regions, ST and SC families as a social group have it worse when it comes to malnourishment, child mortality, and access to basic healthcare².

People's increasing disenchantment with the system is playing a role in the steady decline of the rule of law and authority of governance institutions. According to a release issued by the Press Information Bureau in February 2016, 106 districts are now affected with Left Wing extremist violence³. It is in some of these districts that PRADAN works with the poorest.

Over the years, from our work with rural communities, a critical insight that has emerged about the dynamics of oppression is that the only way to stop it is by creating a countervailing power that opposes it. In rural India this power is being generated by uniting and collectivizing the most oppressed, i.e. women, democratically. The power of numbers is transforming individual vulnerability into group solidarity and enabling the poor to assert their voice and demand their rightful due.



Women's collectives are beginning to challenge and change unfair power relationships, be it in their families, their neighborhood or their villages. Their growing numbers and stories of change is proof that through them is being born India's New Rural

Women's collectives are beginning to challenge and change unfair power relationships, be it in their families, their neighborhood or their villages. They are triggering more equitable social, political and economic changes in their communities. Their growing numbers and stories of change is proof that through them is being born India's New Rural.

This year, we worked with 588,829 women through self-help-group collectives, impacting the lives of nearly three million adults and children. It is a 22 percent growth in household coverage, i.e. an increase of 106,672 households over a base of 482,157 households. The figures are significant considering we work with highly marginalized SC and ST women in regions with the slowest economic growth and abysmally poor human conditions.

Our efforts, every year, to reach poor women and work together to build self-help groups has so far seen the successful creation of 46,416 such groups.

These self-help groups are aggregated into 3,685 village organizations (VOs) and 90-block level federations (BLFs). Together, they are bringing more poor women into the fold, strengthening their numbers, and demanding for and getting their dues from different levels of government. Be it for health, food, employment, education services or income opportunities.

With sensitive facilitation, women's self-help groups are coming up with solutions to some of rural India's most challenging issues.

1. SECC survey 2011 and NHRC 2015

2. Highest child mortality: SRS Statistical Report 2013

3. pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=116706

1. Rebuilding Responsive Local Governance and Service Institutions for Citizens

The aspiration of a better life, for the majority of India's rural population, is trapped in the partisan political system, an insensitive bureaucracy and weak Gram Panchayats.

Proactive citizenship is the need of the hour if life at a village is to be lived with dignity and prosperity. Strengthening community collectives to articulate their aspirations, building connects between these aspirations and provisions of government programs, and understanding what an individual's rights and duties are as a citizen of India, was the focus this year.

The initiative to build citizenship and governance perspectives among community collectives began with the groups articulating their vision of a better life. Federation members then systematically engaged with the

There has been a 73 percent increase of women participating in Gram Sabhas compared to the previous year



primary groups to help map their aspirations. The exercise equipped women with real data and cases to confront line departments and duty bearers and demand accountability. Three hundred women were trained across PRADAN's development clusters to function as knowledge bearers and support the collectives with information on issues at hand.

Ten Community Information and Resource Centers (CIRCs) were in operation to assist communities with information sharing. CIRCs were developed as social enterprises to provide information on government schemes as well as offer supportive services. Each center, run and managed by a trained local woman, is equipped to provide information to community members at a nominal cost. Besides helping community members avail benefits and entitlements, the information provided becomes a powerful tool in their hands when they approach

concerned departments to put forth their requirements.

PRADAN's engagement with the Cluster Facilitation Team (CFT)⁴ of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) and National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) convergence program resulted in a spurt of growth in the demand for asset creation in villages. The program, spearheaded by self-help groups, focused on creating participatory village development plans, approving them at the Gram Sabhas, demanding work and timely wages, and in creating livelihood assets. These plans helped build accountability of the Gram Panchayats. Over 56,000 households were supported within this initiative.

Constructing farm ponds, water harvesting structures, composting pits and setting up livestock sheds and large-scale orchards were major initiatives taken up by community collectives to strengthen livelihood opportunities.

Task groups of women's federations, such as MGNREGA *Sahayata Kendras* (help centers), *Nyay Samitis* (justice committees), *Nari Adalats* (women's courts), etc. regularly interacted with different government bodies and disseminated information to the collectives, thereby, reducing information asymmetry and improving the status of service delivery.

⁴ Cluster Facilitation Team is a project of the Ministry of Rural Development meant to converge MGNREGS & DAY-NRLM. It was rolled out in 207 poverty stricken blocks of India. In each of these places, a team of natural resource management experts and social mobilizers were engaged to bridge human resource gaps at the block and panchayat level to effectively develop livelihood linked village development plans and implement the same.



2. Securing Sustainable Livelihoods and Regular Incomes

Over 270,000 farmers adopted improved paddy production methods such as System of Root Intensification, and Direct Seeded Rice. And over 120,000 farmers cultivated drought tolerant varieties of pulses and oilseeds to withstand the effects of climate change

Reviving farm-based incomes

Farming is increasingly becoming a non-viable income option even though it is the main source of livelihood for an overwhelming 58 percent of rural households. Rain-dependent farming offers hardly any avenue for financial growth because it is paddy monocrop-based and chiefly for subsistence. Making the situation worse are erratic monsoons, climate change, rising cost of farm inputs, failure of states to administer minimum support price (MSP) and entry barriers for small producers to Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs). Not surprisingly, farming is becoming a distressful venture for small and marginal farm holders.

Coming up with plans of 'what to cultivate' and how to maintain land productivity was the objective of massive self-help group deliberations this year. These resulted in farmer-family-based goal setting for incomes and productivity. Plans on how farmers would use their land in the next five years were developed.

The goal of every family was to double farm income and achieve year-round food grain sufficiency from their own land. For this, households chose to limit land under paddy at the same time improve its productivity so yields were substantial. Over 270,000 farmers adopted improved paddy production methods such as System of Root Intensification (SRI), and Direct Seeded Rice (DSR). And over 120,000 farmers cultivated drought-tolerant varieties of pulses and oilseeds to withstand the effects of climate change. These changes added stability to farm production.

To increase cash income, farmers chose to bring some portions of their land under vegetable cultivation. This was a significant shift in mindset and cropping pattern for them. For water security, large number of farm ponds and seepage tanks were created mostly through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to irrigate an additional 2,250 hectares. Pump sets and farm implements such as weeding machines, seed driller, power tiller, etc. were acquired by farmers by leveraging credit from banks and accessing relevant government schemes.

To help small-farmers access farming and production facilities with economies of scale, the concept of Agriculture Production Clusters (APCs) came into being. Through APCs, farm production and marketing services in a given area (i.e. four to six contiguous villages, involving 300 to 500 families) are organized to provide required institutional support to facilitate small-farmers to intensify farming. APCs are providing a supportive ecosystem for farmers to enhance their scale of production with diversity of crops. APCs have facilitated easy aggregation of produce and access to fairer markets.

Availability of bank credit (through self-help groups), access to irrigation and farm implements, availability of production and marketing services through APCs have together contributed to production increases and income enhancement at the household level.

There has been a significant jump in income benchmarks with 20 percent of the households attaining annual gross income levels in the range of INR 80,000 to INR 120,000. Another 35 percent earned a gross income between INR 40,000 and INR 80,000 annually. At an aggregated level, the value of farm produce (taking into account food grains, pulses and oilseeds, fruits and vegetable) was around INR 12,500 million.

Expanding non-farm income avenues

PRADAN continued to work with the National Small Holder Poultry Development Trust (NSPDT) and its affiliates across development clusters to expand broiler poultry enterprises among marginally landed or landless households. With the involvement of 10,441 women producers in the enterprise, this forms the largest grouping of poultry producers in the country with the sales turnover touching INR 3,600 million.

Improved goat rearing and backyard poultry rearing were activities introduced to diversify and

supplement livelihoods of marginalized households. Poultry rearing has emerged a winner with 37,000 poor households adopting it within a short period.

PRADAN also worked with Tasar Development Foundation (TDF), a sectoral organization for Tasar sericulture. It continued expanding its outreach to create robust

livelihoods for families from Tasar. There are 11,071 households, mostly belonging to tribal and particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) communities, engaged in sericulture. TDF currently supports the largest Tasar seed production enterprise in the private sector in India. The income generated from silkworm rearing was approximately INR 181 million.



3. Villages as Authors of an 'Equal Opportunities' Society

There has been a 73 percent increase of women participating in Gram Sabhas compared to the previous year

For PRADAN the core development task in helping poor rural communities live better, is to inspire and build poor communities' (especially women's) self-view and identity as stakeholders of their own lives. They need to see themselves as change making groups with the wherewithal and understanding necessary to create a better society. For poor women to be a part of the self-help group movement requires that they regard themselves as part of a mission that goes beyond savings and credit. A mission that transforms villages where everyone, irrespective of caste, class and gender can experience freedom, care and progress.

In India, women are at the intersection of caste, class and gender prejudices and patriarchy. PRADAN's gender justice efforts over the past few years have enabled women to recognize patriarchy and integrate gender perspectives so women's institutions in the communities are able to identify and address issues of gender discrimination. In this direction, the engagement has been to achieve empowerment in the social, political and economic domain for women in marginalized tribal communities.



PRADAN's gender justice efforts over the past few years have enabled women to recognize patriarchy and integrate gender perspectives and to identify and address issues of gender discrimination



As a result of enhancing gender perspectives of these community institutions 4,030 self-help groups have taken up issues such as: discrimination between male and female children, restrictions on women's mobility, accessing rights and entitlements, equality in political representation, equal participation and control over economic decision making, and ending gender violence.

Today, 11,549 self-help groups are actively engaged in discussing and ensuring women's participation in public spaces such as Gram Sabhas. They are also building capacities of 100 plus women as paralegals within the community to address cases of violence.

Beyond self-help groups and hamlets, the idea of societal transformation is seeded and nurtured in the discourses of the village level organizations (VOs). The VOs nurture aspirations of a better life for members, create conducive conditions to hear and express opinions, shape norms and collectively act on issues that matter to everyone in the village. These issues may range from deprivation of food, income, shelter and basic amenities, etc. to issues of social/psychological exclusion and suppression.

Through the year VOs facilitated women's participation in the Gram

Sabhas. There has been a 73 percent increase of women participating in Gram Sabhas compared to the previous year. Mobilization on Integrated Participatory Planning Exercise (IPPE II) to develop natural resource plans; and plans for agriculture and basic infrastructure continued in different blocks of Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. Once these were vetted and forwarded to the State by the Gram Sabhas and Panchayats, the State made budgetary provisions under MGNREGA, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY); the flagship irrigation program for small-farmers and 14th Finance Commission for allocations to Panchayats. The projects executed included 8,500 farm ponds/seepage tanks and over 5,000 hectares of plantations for forest-based livelihoods and horticulture.

VOs worked on initiatives for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). Their collaboration with Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) resulted in 74 villages having infrastructure for piped water supply systems, construction of around 5,000 toilets and 48 villages being officially declared Open Defecation Free (ODF).

Pilots were undertaken in six villages to install solar power grids to provide round-the-clock power supply. There were cases where VOs were

successful in improving road and electricity connectivity, improving the functioning of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) centers, and the service delivery of health workers, and in regularizing schools by asserting their demands.

Women have begun discussing social issues of domestic violence, alcoholism, girl child trafficking and marginalization of single women and landless households.

With the support of the collectives, women are taking up the responsibility to improve their living

conditions. Self-help group members are actively ensuring full immunization of children, construction and use of toilets and other hygienic practices. They are ensuring girl children continue education beyond standard X, they are addressing gender biases in child rearing, and are engaging with frontline workers of the government to seek advice on health, nutrition and child care.

To fight malnutrition, a focused intervention with women's federations began in 12 blocks in 2014-15. Through skill building and

discussions the federations have successfully created awareness and knowledge to help women understand nutrition, its current status, gender dimensions and the impact of malnourishment on women and children. This year, the collectives trained 600 community cadres on nutrition-sensitive agriculture. And strengthening the link between agriculture and nutrition was the large-scale adoption of pulses and oilseed cultivation by farmers together with a wide array of vegetables to improve food and nutrition diversity in their fields.



The federations have successfully created awareness and knowledge to help women understand nutrition and the impact of malnourishment on women and children