IX

North Chhotanagpur Development Cluster (NCDC)

Jharkhand

North Chhotanagpur region comprises of Hazaribagh, Koderma, Bokaro, Dhanbad, Giridih, and Chatra districts of Jharkhand bordering mainly Bihar and West Bengal. The region is characterized by rolling topography with large stretches of tablelands seen without much of vegetation. A major part of the region comes in the Damodar-Barakar river basin. Hazaribagh (southern part) and Dhanbad are well known for rich coal reserves. Giridih and Koderma are known for their mica mines. Bokaro and Dhanbad form the major industrial enclave in the region with steel, mining, heavy manufacturing and power industries.

Tribals constitute about eight to nine percent of the population and include Santhals, Munda and Oraons and PVTGs like Birhors. SCs constitute around 15 percent of the total population. OBCs constitute about 35 percent of the population in this area.

OVERVIEW OF PRADAN'S OPERATIONS IN NCDC

Particulars	DC Total	PRADAN Outreach
Districts	6	4
Population	11 million	278,990
Percent of Rural Population	69	100
Percent of ST and SC Population	20	37
Households	2 million	55,798

Particulars	Scale
Number of SHGs	4,319
Number of VOs	347
Households covered under Livelihoods	31,099
PRADAN teams	4

Themes	Community Collectives
Health and Nutrition	80 SHGs
Education	70 VOs
WASH	177 Households
Gender and Governance	1,507 SHGs

PRADAN works in districts of Hazaribagh, Koderma, Ramgarh and Bokaro in NCDC.

The major focus areas of the DC are community institution building, generating awareness among women SHG members about gender, patriarchy, and its manifestation in the family, village and society. Women's active participation in grassroots governance is also a priority.

Civic Literacy and Engagement Program (CLEP) Improves Women's Say in Local Governance

We partnered with "We the People" (WTP), a trust, to enhance the communities' understanding of civic duties and functions, and develop institutions that can foster their civic engagements to become responsible and aware citizens. PRADAN along with WTP developed civic awareness and action programs in 10 model Gram Panchayats across three blocks of Koderma and Hazaribagh districts.

In the past two decades, we have mobilized women into Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). Each woman goes through a process of learning to trigger aspirations of a better life and increase her awareness about the roles and responsibilities as a citizen. Women then identify cross-cutting issues and attempt to start a "collective civic action" on issues like proper functioning of local government and working of health and educational institutions at the village level.

We also raise the awareness level of the elected representatives about their roles and responsibilities as envisaged in the constitution and impart training to local level officials in technical and managerial skills to address civic concerns. In order to sustain these initiatives, we are developing a mechanism to increase the collaborative efforts between the CBOs and the local government.

Song of a New Day!

Photo: Surjodoy Nandy

Basanti Devi, aged 35, is one of the few women in her community who has completed schooling. She is a resident of village Puto of Koderma district. She has participated in training on gender, patriarchy, and violence and developed an understanding on women's deprivation. Basanti's association with civic literacy program reinforced her understanding about the values of justice, equality, freedom, and fraternity enshrined in our constitution. She is now versed with various articles, acts and government orders which dictate the funds, functions, and functionaries of the governance system.

Basanti aspires for a vibrant grassroots democracy and end to gender-based discrimination. She is a role model for many women in the block. She has facilitated women's participation in Gram Sabhas in her village and helped women to get their entitlements under Public Distribution System. She also supports women in the area in cases of domestic violence by giving much needed solidarity in distress and provides counselling to families.